

# PLUCK AND LUCK

## STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second-Class Matter at the New York Post Office, November 7, 1898, by Frank Tousey.

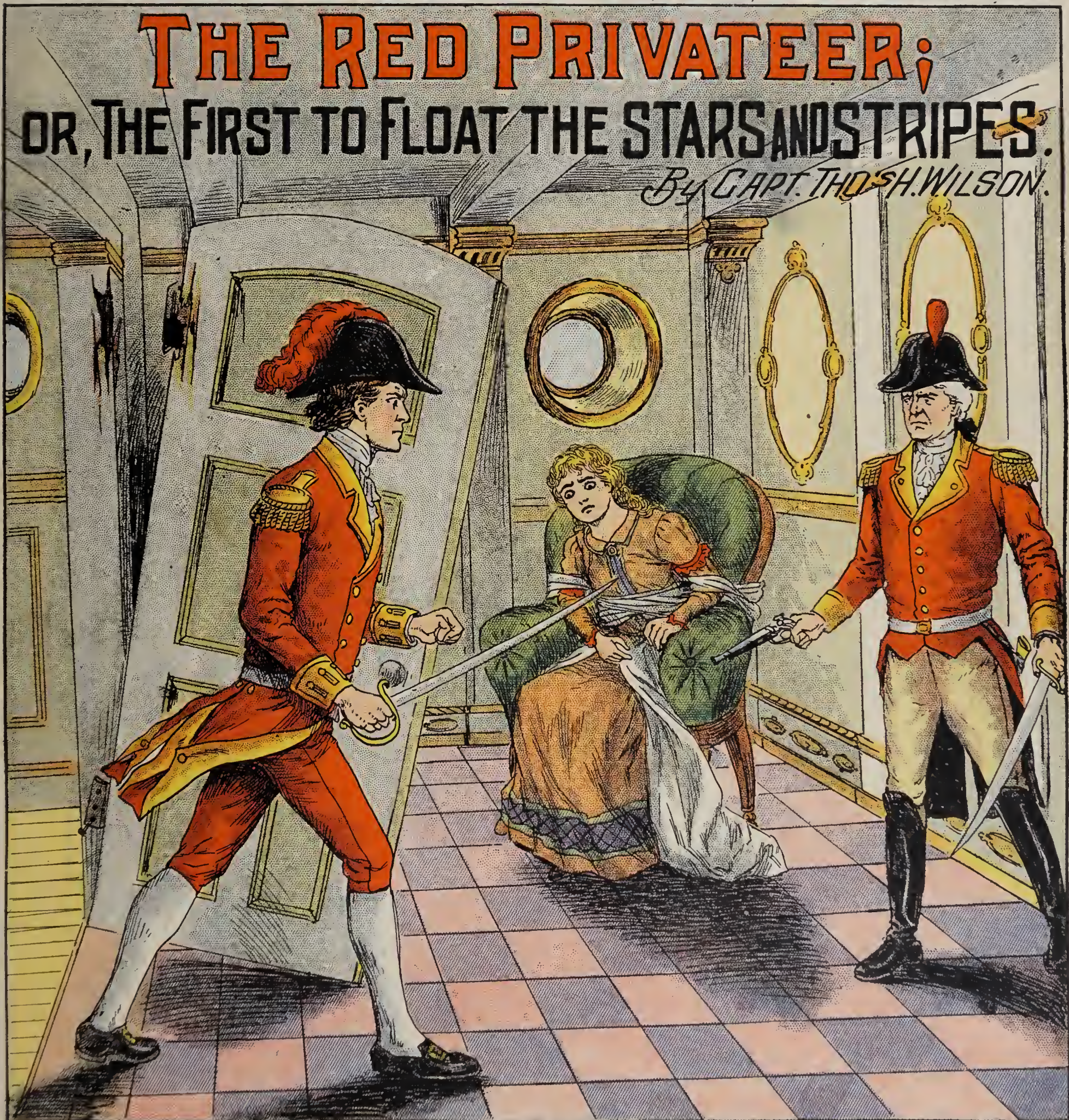
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NEW YORK, APRIL 7, 1909.

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### THE RED PRIVATEER; OR, THE FIRST TO FLOAT THE STARS AND STRIPES.

By CAPT. THOS. WILSON.



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## THE RED PRIVATEER

OR,

### The First to Float the Stars and Stripes

BY CAPTAIN THOS. H. WILSON.

#### CHAPTER I.

##### A STRANGE CASE.

It is just an hour before sunset. The sea is rolling in splendor by the golden rays from the declining sun.

Wing-and-wing before the crisp breeze skims a schooner whose model would have filled a sailor's heart with longing and envy, even in this day of perfection in maritime construction.

She is long, but not narrow; she flies over the waves, rather than dashes through them.

Her sails seem enormous for her size, and yet she carries them easily and buoyantly.

But they are strange looking sails; different from any that are known upon the Atlantic.

They are red—blood red.

Ay, and the hull of the schooner, the masts, the blocks, the spars—everything is red—blood-red.

She presents a strange sight, appearing like a spot of vermilion upon the broad expanse of blue waters, as though a full-blown rose had suddenly burst forth from the bosom of the deep.

On she dashes before the spanking breeze, gracefully, lightly, fleetly.

But, look! What is that in advance of her?

It is a bark, with every stitch of canvas set, trying with all her might to escape her pursuer.

Straining, struggling, groaning, creaking under the weight of sail which covers her decks—laboring to escape as the bulldog might endeavor to outrun a greyhound.

But her efforts are fruitless. The distance which separates them becomes perceptibly less with every moment.

It is a strange chase.

The flying bark looks more powerful than her pursuer. Frowning portholes along her beam denote that she is not without the element of protection; she is armed.

The pursuing schooner has long been within range. When first discovered she could easily have thrown her solid shot upon the decks of the flying bark.

Still she does not fire. She only pursues—relentlessly, successfully.

Why does the bark, which seems the stronger vessel of the

two, struggle so desperately to escape, and that without firing a shot in her own defense?

A well-aimed missile might by chance bring one of those blood-red sails running to the deck, but the attempt is not made.

Why does the schooner, pursuing with such a determined mien, hesitate to fire upon the foe that is straining every nerve to escape her?

A round shot from the long gun in her bows might topple over a mast, or cut the stays of a sail aboard the bark and compel her to lay to.

But not a shot is fired by either vessel. The chase continues in determined silence, as the sun sinks lower and lower.

Neither of the vessels floats a flag; there is nothing about them by which either their identity or their nationality may be determined.

It is a strange chase.

The deck of the schooner is almost deserted. Two forms only can be seen.

One is the man at the wheel, who never moves except to turn the instrument in his hands a trifle to port or to starboard as the schooner rides a swell larger than its mates.

The other is a tall, commanding-looking figure in the chains at the bow. He might be carved in metal, so motionless does he remain, standing with folded arms, gazing upon the flying bark.

The expression of his face is cold, stern, and haughty, while the bright red hue of his uniform lends a beauty to his dark skin and flashing black eyes that is almost startling.

"We gain with every moment," he murmured. "By sundown we will have overhauled the bark. Will he hold his fire until then? Bah! He is a coward, a coward!"

Nearer and nearer creeps the schooner to the bark.

The silent figure at the bow notes the distance which separates them, and realizes that they are within rifle range of each other.

He smiles coldly, and then he utters a shrill whistle.

Instantly a light form darts from the companionway aft and glides swiftly towards him.

"Zara," says the commander, "send Broadships to me here."

The slight form departs to carry out the order, and presently there issues from the hatchway a figure so strange that one starts apprehensively upon beholding it for the first time.



It is the figure of a dwarf—a strange, uncouth being, scarcely four feet in height, and seemingly fully four feet in breadth.

His arms are like the forequarters of a gorilla, bony, muscular, and of extraordinary length. The strength of his muscles must be wonderful.

In like proportion with the length of his arms is the shortness of his legs. He waddles like a duck as he draws near his chief.

With head and features of enormous size, there is yet a kindly, quizzical expression upon his face not to be mistaken, and one knows that he is Irish as certainly as though the word Hibernian had been branded upon his forehead.

Being scarcely four feet in height, and as broad as he is long, the contrast is almost laughable, as he salutes the tall, slender, athletic, graceful person of his chief.

One is the epitome of endurance, tenacity and muscular force; the other is the embodiment of that panther-like grace and determination which never tires or desists.

"Broadsides," says the chief, without turning, "I wish to warn yonder bark."

"Ay, ay, sir," replied the gunner, for such he is. "Shall I sink him or wing him?"

"Neither."

"Nathur is it? Shure, thin it's a love letter ye want to send?"

"Exactly."

"Is it ready, your honor?"

"No. Get the piece ready. I will bring you the note."

"Ay—ay, sir."

The chief hurried towards the cabin, and the gunner draws a tarpaulin cover from a small gun which stands just forward of the big long Tom, at the bow.

"Shure, it's a beauty," he mutters, patting it fondly; then he opens a locker beneath, and draws forth a round ball about the size of an apple, and as red as the uniform he wears.

With a quick twist he caused it to part in the middle, disclosing the fact that it is hollow.

At that moment the chief returns, and in one hand is a folded bit of paper.

He hands it to the gunner without a word, and that person places it at once within the hollow ball, after which he closes it again, and thrusts it into the muzzle of the gun.

It is a strange proceeding, but one which a few words will explain. The ball is so constructed that upon striking any hard substance it will open, thus allowing whatever it contains to fall to the deck.

"We are near enough to shoot a rifle ball into the cabin windows of the bark," says the chief. "See that you hit nobody, but put that letter upon the deck yonder."

"Ay—ay, sir."

The chief walks aft a little way. The gunner sights his piece. Presently there is a sharp report like the crack of a rifle, only louder.

The blood-red ball can be seen as it cuts a graceful curve between the two vessels and strikes full in the center of the bark's deck.

Instantly there is a commotion. The chief can see even with his naked eyes that the shot had caused considerable excitement.

But nevertheless he raises his glass. Through it he sees an officer upon the deck of the bark engaged in reading his letter.

More, he sees him frown; he almost fancies that he can hear him swear.

"Will he do as I request?" mutters the chief. "Ah, what now? He gives an order to one of his men. The man raises a rifle; he points it at me; he is going to fire, and they expect to see me fall. Bah; do they think that I am a fool?"

The chief does not move. He keeps the glass at his eye.

Presently there comes a sudden puff of smoke, and the next instant he feels a blow upon his breast, closely followed by the report of a rifle from the deck of the bark.

The chief smiles and waves his hand.

"A good shot!" he murmurs. "It would have done for me but for the jacket of steel. Bah! I sent him a message; he has sent his reply. So be it. Broad-sides!" he cries, sharply, turning toward the Irish dwarf.

"Ay, ay, sur."

"Cut out his sticks. Don't leave one standing—not one!"

"Ay, ay, sur."

Then the chief whistles shrilly again, and once more the slight form glides to his side.

"The gunner's assistants," orders the chief briefly, and then he turns and goes below, while presently a half dozen sailors in red join Broad-sides in the bow.

There is a moment of silence as the dwarf trains his piece to suit him. Presently it is ready, and then comes the loud report.

The shot is well aimed.

It strikes the mainmast of the bark, about ten feet above the deck.

There is a flying of splinters, and then the crash of the falling mast.

But it is not all to be so easily accomplished.

The crashing down of the after sails caused the bark to swing, thus bringing her port guns to bear.

Instantly they are discharged, and the air is filled with noise and smoke and flying missiles.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE.

The broadside fired by the bark does little or no execution aboard the red schooner. It was fired as she was swinging around, after her mainmast had been shot away, and the aim was therefore very imperfect.

As the sailors spring forward to cut away the wreck, the long gun at the schooner's bow speaks again.

The terrible certainty in the aim with which the Irish dwarf directs his fire is unnatural. With him it is more of a gift than an accomplishment.

Whenever he sights a piece, the ball goes straight to the mark as certainly and with as little seeming effort as ever Doctor Carver fired his rifle, or the lamented Ira Paine his revolver.

His messmates look upon him with superstitious awe, and among them he is known as the "wizard of the gun."

When the second shot is fired the chief once more appears on the deck.

He whistles shrilly after a peculiar fashion, and instantly in reply to the signal thus given a crowd of men leap from the hatchway.

Out they rush pell-mell, and yet in perfect order, fully armed and equipped for battle, each one arrayed in that dazzling uniform of red well calculated to strike terror to the hearts of foes.

"Lay her by the boards!" orders the chief, in a ringing voice which enters every ear aboard the schooner.

"Prepare to board!" comes the next order, and the men one and all take their positions.

In a moment more there is a violent shock, and the schooner and the bark are side by side, firmly fastened together by the grappling hooks, which have been thrown out and made fast.

"Repel boarders!" comes the hoarse command from the deck



of the bark, and the crew rush to their places to meet the avalanche of red warriors which swarm over the rail.

It is indeed an avalanche.

Nothing can resist the rush of that red crew.

It is strange, also, that while the men of the bark fall before them as grass withers before the scorching blaze of a prairie fire, those who wear the uniform of scarlet move on through the mass seemingly unhurt.

Time after time a bullet is discharged point-blank at the heart of one of them, but he only smiles, and fights on more relentlessly than ever.

The crew of the bark begin to think that their foes are unnatural—that they are fighting with supernatural beings.

At first they are astonished, then dismayed, then frightened, and then, as with one accord, they cast down their arms and surrender.

The crew of the red schooner are victorious; the short but decisive battle is won.

The tall, commanding form of the chief leaps forward. He passes through the mass of men and makes his way swiftly to the cabin of the bark.

The door refuses to yield to the pressure that he put upon it. He hesitates but an instant, then, drawing back, he throws himself against the barrier.

It cannot withstand the strain.

The fastenings are broken loose; the door flies open.

The chief makes one effort to step forward. He gains the interior of the cabin, and then he pauses with a cry of dismay.

Before him is a tableau upon which he had little thought to look.

An officer in the uniform of the British navy is standing in the middle of the cabin near a huge center-table.

Seated in a large upholstered chair directly in front of him is a young lady. She is as beautiful as a dream, but her face is pale, and her eyes are frightened and staring.

A silken sash is passed around her body just beneath her arms, and it binds her motionless to the chair.

In the officer's hand is a pistol.

Well may the chief pause abruptly, for he reads the entire meaning of the tableau at the instant when his eyes first rested upon it.

The British officer is the first to speak.

"Advance but one step nearer," he says; "ay, so much as raise your hand or make but one single move that I may deem aggressive, and I will fire. I'll give you and your crew five minutes to leave my ship."

The chief does not know what to do in the emergency.

He reads determination in the tones which address him. Although defeated, his face is yet victorious, for the purpose for which the battle has been fought is lost.

"You, then, give me five minutes?" asks the chief.

"Ay, but at your peril move nothing but your tongue and your eyelids, else at the slightest motion I will fire."

"Irma," said the chief, "speak to me——"

"No!" thundered the British officer, "she shall not speak! I forbid it. I am desperate now. Go, Hal Hawkwing, your time has expired. Go, I say—I will not wait longer!"

The chief's eyes flash fire. His handsome face flushes hotly, but his voice is calm and low when he replies:

"Very well," he says. "I go. It is to save Irma's life that I obey you."

"I go, Oscar Raven, but I will come again. I will not lose sight of you, and beware—beware—I say, for what you then may have to answer."

He turns upon his heel and leaves the cabin.

Once upon the deck he motions Broadships to approach.

"Go," he says, "and spike every gun upon the bark. Ren-

der them utterly useless. Then open the magazine and wet down his powder."

The dwarf turns to obey, and the chief muses on.

"With no armament and no ammunition, I will know his destination. I can be there first, and I can wait for him. Let him set his juremasts and make his way to port. Hal Hawkwing will be there in waiting."

It does not require much time to carry out the orders he had given, and as soon as the work is done the crew of red uniforms return to their schooner.

Then the grappling irons are cast off, and the vessels slowly drift apart.

Darkness is just settling down over the sea, when a huge bit of bunting is seen ascending the mainmast of the schooner.

Up, up it goes until it reaches the uttermost height.

Then the breeze catches it, and it floats out upon the wind.

It is the stars and stripes—the emblem of liberty.

The Declaration of Independence has not yet been signed; the war of the Revolution is not yet begun; the call for patriots has not yet been sounded and answered from coast to mountain on the soil of America, and yet there, at the main truck of the red schooner, floats the very flag which the struggling colonies subsequently adopted.

It is a strange coincidence, and one which is not generally known to this day, but a package of forgotten letters has revealed this history to the author, who now for the first time makes it known to the world.

Hal Hawkwing has been the first to declare liberty. The English yoke has galled him; he can wear it no longer; and, utilizing all the means of which he is possessed, he has built the schooner and armed her. Then, that she may never be mistaken, he has painted her red.

As soon as she is ready for sea he has written a letter to the First Lord of the Admiralty, in which he said boldly that he had declared war against Great Britain, "and," he has added, "if my red privateer cannot whip your bull-dogs, she can run from them. You have not a vessel in your navy that can catch her, nor can you build one."

That he was right the sequel will determine.

For upwards of six months he had been afloat in his Red Privateer.

But there is yet another reason besides his reluctance to live under English domination which takes Hal Hawkwing to sea.

Another reason, and by far a more potent one.

We have seen a suggestion of it in the cabin scene, but not enough to enlighten us.

As the vessels fall apart, the stars and stripes float on the breeze and the crew of the Red Privateer set up a hearty cheer.

The chief springs into the rigging.

"Men!" he cried, "behold our banner. The stripes represent the oppression and wrongs from which we have freed ourselves by an act which proclaims us outlaws—pirates! The stars are the beacons of hope for the future, while the red, the white, and the blue signify that by the shedding of blood only can we attain the white wings of independence and freedom, and the blue dome of heaven."

Cheer after cheer goes up from the crew.

"Men," continued the chief, "the colonies that we call home are not yet strong enough to declare their independence, but the day is coming when they will throw off the English yoke and declare for freedom, equality, and the right to legislate for themselves."

"We have sailed together for months, but until to-day we have not struck a blow. Now our work has begun, and we will strike hard and fast. In yonder vessel is at this moment my greatest enemy. I have given him one more chance to



atone for his sins, and we will leave him there to make port as best he can."

"Better yardarm 'em at once and have done with it!" cries a voice from the crew.

The chief's eyes flash fire.

"John Meeker, step here!" he ordered sternly.

A sailor with an evil countenance and hang-dog face slouches towards his commander.

"Why do you venture a suggestion?" asked the chief, calmly.

"Because I for one hates to see so much prize money go to waste," replied Meeker, sullenly.

"Are there any others who are dissatisfied?" asks Hal Hawkwing, quietly, raising his voice; but no one answers.

"Go below, sir!" he orders. "It is well that you have spoken now, for your life is spared. A week later, and you would have been yard-armed. As it is, you will be set ashore at the first land we sight. Go!"

The man turns without a word, but there is an evil glitter in his eyes.

"Men," continues Hal, "if there are any here who will not obey me without question speak now, for when once we have reached the retreat to which I am bound there can be no escape from this vessel except by death. Remember the oath in the red book. I will not be trifled with."

There is a murmur of approval, and then a loud cheer from the crew, while Hal Hawkwing turns away with a satisfied smile.

"'Tis well," he thinks. "I shall succeed."

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE FIGHT IN SMALL BOATS.

A month later.

In the harbor of Havana lies a beautiful white schooner at anchor.

She floats like a duck upon the water; her sails are furled; she is at rest.

Two cable's length from her a bark has just come to anchor. It is evident that she has put in for repairs, for her spars are missing and jury masts fill their places.

A solitary figure is leaning against the wheel at the schooner's stern. It is the figure of Hal Hawkins, and at once it becomes evident that both he and his vessel are in disguise.

There is a satisfied smile upon his face as he watches the dismantled bark.

"At last!" he mutters. "She has been longer in getting here than I thought, but now I have only a few more hours to wait."

The sun reaches the meridian and begins its downward course.

Evening comes—then darkness.

A quiet order is given, and presently the deck of the schooner is thronged with men in red uniforms.

Hal Hawkwing passes among them, giving his orders in a low tone.

Boats are lowered, and the men clamber into them, silently, but with determined mien.

Then they pull away from the schooner and make their way toward the bark.

There are four boats in all, and they silently surround their prey.

Then they swoop upon her. The men swarm up the sides.

There is one sharp challenge from the deck of the bark, and then all is silence again.

The bark is captured without a shot being fired—without a sound being made.

With determined step, Hal Hawkwing makes his way to the cabin. He tries the door. It opens easily.

He passes through it and then pauses abruptly.

The cabin is empty.

With a cry of alarm he hastily searches the place, but when, in his eagerness, he pulls open the door of a stateroom, he starts back with an exclamation of horror.

Stretched upon the floor is the form of a girl.

In an instant he is on his knees beside her.

For many moments he remains silent.

He knows that she is dead, but why?

There is no mark of violence, no evidence of the cause of her death. She lies there in her wondrous beauty, cold, silent, still, dead.

Slowly our hero rises to his feet. The expression of his face is as rigid as that of the dead girl before him.

He lifts his right hand high over his head and speaks.

His voice is calm and cold, but terrible in its intensity.

"Here is a debt which I must repay!" he says. "As Heaven hears me, it shall be counted out with interest to every fraction. Irma, my sister, you shall be avenged."

He raises the silent form in his arms and goes with it to the deck.

Just as he issues from the companion way, he hears a shout.

One of his men rushes towards him.

"Chief!" he cries, "the schooner is attacked. The harbor is swarming with boats."

A glance proves that the words are true. The dark outlines can be seen upon the black water of the harbor.

He kisses the face of his dead sister tenderly and rushes back into the cabin with his burden.

In another instant he is upon the deck again.

"To the boats!" he cried, but the men have anticipated.

In a moment more they are all pulling towards the schooner, straining every nerve to reach it before the enemy.

Suddenly a bright light illumines the waters, rendering everything plainly discernible. A huge pile of casks had been lighted upon the shore. The necessity had evidently been foreseen, and the pile soaked with oil ready for lighting.

It burns up brightly, and Hal Hawkwing and his men see a strange sight.

A small boat, rowed by a gigantic negro, is rushing through the water toward the schooner. In the stern is the figure of a female. In the lurid light of the burning casks Hal sees that she is beautiful.

Behind them swarm fully a score of boats, fully manned.

They are in pursuit of her and of the negro. They have not thought of the schooner.

The chief takes in the situation at a glance.

She, a stranger, has made her escape from some captivity. She has seen the schooner in the harbor. It is her only hope, and she is flying to its commander for protection.

"By jove, she shall have it!" cries Hal, leaping to his feet and standing erect in the stern of his boat.

"Fly, lady!" he calls in Spanish; "fly to the schooner. You shall be protected."

"Si, senor; mil gracias," she replies, and her boat, propelled by the powerful muscles of the negro, shoots by him.

"Boat four!"

"Ay—ay, sir," comes the answer from one of the Red Privateer's boats.

"To the schooner! quick, for your lives! Cut the cable! Up sails! Tell Broadships we trust to him!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Boats two and three!"

"Ay—ay, sir!"

"Ready, all! To the attack!"

A hearty cheer is the answer.



The pursuing boats are nonplused for an instant, but they do not cease their onward rush.

In a moment more the foremost of them and that of the schooner, in which is the chief, are together.

The loud reports of a score of pistols, the clashing of steel against steel; the hoarse shouts of the men fill the air with din.

They are about evenly matched, and the encounter is terrific.

Almost instantly the others are engaged, and the fighting becomes general.

The boats from the Red Privateer are together, and fully a dozen of those from the shore crowd around them.

There seems to be no hope for the brave fellows in red.

Outnumbered four or five to one as they are, surrounded completely by a horde of enemies thirsting for their lives, and with nothing but small boats beneath their feet, the situation is desperate.

But the very numbers of the enemy are against their success.

In endeavoring to rush in upon the three boats from the schooner one of them is capsized.

The men flounder in the water, and seize the gunwales of their companion crafts, and in their frantic efforts to get out of the water, two more boats are capsized.

The men in red fight like demons.

Their shirts of mail protect them, and but few fall, while every blow that they strike tells fatally upon the foe.

Suddenly the chief espies in the boat farthest from him two faces that he recognizes.

One is that of the captain of the dismantled bark, the other is that of John Meeker, one of his own crew.

Instantly he knows all. He realizes that he has been betrayed.

All the lion within him is aroused at once.

He forgets how his men are outnumbered—forgets everything but that his greatest enemy is within reach of his arm if he can but get to him.

The men are fighting and falling around him.

A dozen bullets have flattened themselves against the steel which protects his heart. A dozen swords have been broken or blunted against the same impenetrable barrier.

He stands erect, towering above the others.

Suddenly he gives one wild spring, such as an angry panther might take to avenge her young.

It is a leap for life—a leap for revenge.

It is gigantic.

In that one mad effort he clears the boat, full of men, which is between him and the enemy he hates, and alights fairly upon the gunwale of the boat he seeks to reach.

The shock of his weight is more than the equilibrium of the frail craft can stand.

In an instant it is overturned, and the occupants are floundering in the water.

But even as they go down, Hal Hawkwing reaches out and seizes his foe by the throat.

It is the one man he hates—the captain of the dismantled bark.

His fingers close around the Englishman's throat with a pressure that is terrific.

But even in one instant much can happen.

John Meeker, the traitor, saw the chief when he made the fearful leap, and made ready to receive him.

Just as the boat is capsizing, just as Hal Hawkwings's fingers clutch the English captain by the throat and they fall into the sea, the huge knife of the traitor descends.

He knows that the chief wears a coat of mail, and he knows where he can strike and avoid it.

It is a terrible blow, and one which is fully intended to end the life of Hal Hawkwing then and there; but the lurching of the boat as it throws its occupants into the water is great enough to spoil his aim.

The knife point strikes the steel shirt, and is snapped off at the hilt.

Then the waters close over the forms of the chief and his enemy. They sink out of sight beneath the waves.

But the fight goes on, madder, wilder, more terrible than ever.

Suddenly the chief rises to the surface and his quick eyes look with one hasty glance around him.

He seeks to regain one of his own boats.

The English captain is no longer in his grasp. He has left him for dead beneath the waters of the harbor.

But upon rising to the surface himself he is close by the gunwale of an enemy's boat—the boat into which John Meeker had already been drawn.

The traitor recognized his chief.

With a loud cry he points at him.

"The chief—the chief!" he cries.

In an instant he seizes an oar, and with all his strength brings it down upon Hal Hawkwing's head.

Like the heel of Achilles, it is his vulnerable point.

With a groan he sinks again beneath the water.

But an arm is stretched out quickly. It seizes him, and the next instant he is drawn into the enemy's boat unconscious, apparently dead.

"Away!" cries Meeker. "We have the chief! Away!"

The men seized their oars and dashed them into the water.

The boat shoots out from the general melee of the fight, and is propelled rapidly towards the shore.

Hal Hawkwing, the chief of the Red Privateer, is a prisoner.

On flies the boat.

The men in red see it, but they are powerless to pursue, for they are fighting for their lives.

The fire on the shore is dying out. In another moment all will be dark again.

On flies the boat with its unconscious captive.

Suddenly there is a loud boom from the schooner.

A solid shot flies over the water, and strikes the escaping boat in the bow.

It wrecks her instantly, and the captive and captors are one and all precipitated into the water.

The fire on the shore flashes up for one instant more, and then goes out.

All is darkness, and yet the fight goes on.

## CHAPTER IV.

### A BLACK HERCULES.

If the firing of the gun by Broadships from the deck of the Red Privateer—the gun which wrecked the boat in which the chief, Hal Hawkwing, was being borne away a prisoner—had been the signal for the fire to suddenly die out on the shore, the scheme could not have worked better.

No sooner had the ball struck the small boat and wrecked it, participating its occupants into the water, than the surface of the harbor became once more wrapped in gloom.

In gloom? Ah! in a darkness most intense, for following upon the brilliancy of the lurid illumination nothing in the stygian-like blackness which seemed to fall like a pall over the water whereon so much was transpiring.



Notwithstanding this, however, report after report rang out from that terrible gun in the bow of the red privateer.

Broadsides knew by the sound of voices—by the flash of pistols—by the clash of broadswords—where to aim his death-dealing implement of war, and the execution which he did was as though an imp of the evil one had become perched upon the muzzle of the piece in order to personally direct the projectiles which came from it.

Time after time it roared, and in its awful voice.

Shot after shot, expectorated from its brazen throat, bounded from wave to wave over the sea, and crashed into boats filled to the gunwales with human freight.

Crew after crew were spilled into the briny water—some dead, some dying, and others struggling to gain a hold upon the edge of some craft which still floated upon the midnight sea.

The whole scene made up a spectacle most awful.

The belching of that terrible gun under the control of Broadsides; the flash of menacing fire, which for an instant lighted up the waters of the harbor, revealing one hundred floundering, struggling figures, swimming wildly about in their endeavors to gain a foothold upon some friendly boat; the clash of arms as they still beat madly against each other, and the constant cry which floated upwards until it filled the air: "Hawkwing and Freedom!" the maddening uncertainty as to whether one was striking friend or foe—all united, lent an aspect of terror to the scene never to be forgotten.

The reader will remember that just before the fight began, a boat propelled by a negro, with a young lady in the stern, had shot past the chief, bound in the direction of the schooner.

Leaving the fight at the moment when darkness hid everything from view, we will go back to the boat containing the fugitives.

The words of welcome from Hal Hawkwing shouted as they flew past, the assurance of protection fell upon the ears of the girl like notes of sweetest music.

With well chosen words she encouraged the negro to redoubled exertions, so that in a very short space of time they were upon the deck of the Red Privateer.

The crew of No. 4 boat had returned in obedience to the chief's orders, and instantly the words of command which he had given were passed.

The cable was severed, the sails were hoisted, and Broadsides went to his gun.

But the girl, Juanita, paid but little heed to these things.

She ran at once to the poop deck, and from there watched with flushed cheek and wildly beating heart the progress of the battle that was being waged.

Half behind her, crouching in the attitude of an animal about to leap upon its prey, was the negro, Don.

His eyes were glistening with a hungry look; his hands clenched and unclenched with eagerness to be in the midst of the fray, while his lips were drawn back over his teeth after the manner of an angry mastiff whose domicile has been invaded by an unwelcome intruder.

Juanita, breathless in her expectation of what might happen, and Don, ferocious in his eagerness to take part in the fight, were as though rooted to the poop deck of the Red Privateer, the one standing, the other crouching.

The moment came when the chief, Hal Hawkwing, stood up and leaped at the throat of Oscar Raven, the ex-captain of the dismantled brig.

A low, intense cry escaped from between Juanita's lips, while Don ground his teeth savagely together.

"See! See!" cried the girl.

"Don sees!" replied the negro.

The chief struck the rail.

They saw him seize his enemy by the throat.

They saw the knife in the hands of John Meeker as it rose and descended, aimed at the heart of the chief.

They saw the oar raised, and saw the blow struck which rendered our hero insensible.

They saw him dragged into the boat, a prisoner.

Ay, and they saw the boat disengage itself from the others, and start rapidly shoreward, and then came the loud report of the gun which Broadsides had fired, and the wrecking of the boat in which Hal Hawkwing was a prisoner.

Then darkness most intense.

In an instant Juanita had turned and seized the negro Don by the arm.

"Go," she cried, "he is in the water. In the water, do you hear? You can save him! You, and you only! Go, bring him here alive, or never return to tell of your failure."

The negro needed no second bidding.

With a guttural assent he tightened the belt around his waist, and without a word rushed to the rail.

The next instant he had plunged headforemost into the black waters of the harbor.

The darkness was so intense that not a thing could be seen, and only the loud clashing of arms and the angry cries of the men told the story of that terrible battle.

Juanita still stood upon the poopdeck, her body inclined forward as she watched through the darkness for some sign of the negro Don's return.

To the reader it may seem like an utterly frail hope, but to the girl who was familiar with the prowess of the black it seemed but natural that he should succeed in the mission upon which she had sent him.

His giant-like strength; his almost supernatural power as a swimmer and diver; his thorough knowledge of the harbor, and last, but by no means least, his utter and absolute devotion to her, which lent to him a power of determination and fixed purpose almost superhuman, all inspired her with hope.

But let us return to Don, instead of awaiting his return.

He had been waiting with all eagerness the moment when his mistress should give him the word to go, and when it came, he lost no time, but with a rush and a leap dove into the stygian waters.

By nature he was almost amphibious.

From his earliest recollection he had been more at home when breasting the waves than when his feet were planted solidly upon terra firma.

Accordingly, he swam for a considerable distance beneath the surface of the bay, at last coming to the top fully twenty fathoms from the schooner's side.

Then he struck out with great, powerful strokes which caused him to shoot through the water with the speed of a boat propelled by oars.

He had taken his bearings when in the act of leaping, so that when he rose to the surface he directed his course straight for the spot where Broadsides' shot had wrecked the boat in which the unconscious chief had been a captive.

The distance was not very great, and to a powerful swimmer like Don it was soon passed over.

Before long he was in the midst of swimming forms, some of which were clinging to pieces of the wreck, and nearly all of whom were calling aloud to their companions in misfortune.

If Don was devoted to his mistress in carrying out her wishes to the letter, he also had his own ax to grind.

He hated the men who had been pursuing the boat in which he had escaped with Juanita, and he realized that he could accomplish a double purpose in the expedition that he had undertaken.

No sooner was he in the midst of the struggling, cursing crowd that he dove like a seal.



Before him, in the darkness, he had seen the outlines of two forms who were clinging to the stern of the wrecked boat.

With a grin of exultation upon his black features he dove quickly beneath them, and the next instant he seized one of them by the legs and began dragging him down, down into the depths.

Imagine the horror that his victim felt when he realized that some unseen foe was dragging him down to death.

He struggled and cried out, and strove with all his might to tear himself loose from that terrible grasp.

But his efforts were futile.

He was in the grasp of one whose clutch was that of a giant, and the waves closed over his head despite his frantic efforts.

A moment later, and Don was again upon the surface, but his victim rose no more, except to float upon his face devoid of life.

A few deep breaths, and again the negro dove, grasping the feet of the second figure.

What was his surprise to find, however, that the man came away from the piece of floating wreck without effort, and devoid of resistance.

"Golly!" thought Don. "I speck I've got de boss."

Two or three powerful kicks sent him again to the surface, and the next instant satisfied the black Hercules that it was indeed the captain of the Red Privateer whom he had in his grasp, for at that instant the fire on the shore again blazed up brightly.

## CHAPTER V.

### SWIMMING FOR LIFE.

It was a time of great peril for the negro as well as for Hal Hawkwing, for the brilliant blaze that so suddenly burst forth from the shore lighted up the harbor again as brightly as at midday.

Hawkwing was still unconscious, but Don was glad of that, for it gave him a better opportunity for saving him.

Realizing in an instant that he would soon be discovered and fired upon, the negro at once struck out for the schooner, swimming with one hand, and with the other managing to hold the unconscious chief so that his head was above water.

But they had not gone far when a loud shout told him that his identity was discovered.

The light from the shore revealed not only his own black face, but the red uniform of the chief.

The fight had come to an end. The boats from the shore were returning, and they were between the negro and the schooner.

The instant that they discovered him they turned their bows so that they rowed directly toward the spot where he was.

"Golly!" muttered the negro. "Ef it wasn't fo' this feller, dis chile 'ud like ter see dem trash cotch me—huh! I cud dive an' swim un'ner 'em, but dis yar capting would be drowned fo' shuah, an' Missy Nita say dat I'se gotter bring him back alibe."

Nearer and nearer came the boats.

They did not fire, because they felt certain that there was no need for it.

They had only to row up and take their prisoners with little or no effort.

But they did not know the cunning which dwelt beneath that cloak of black wool.

Don stopped swimming, and supporting his burden, began treading water while he waited for the boats to approach.

"Tree of 'em!" he muttered, "I kin git away wid two, but what'll dis chile do wid de oder one?"

He shook his head dubiously.

On board the schooner they were watching the proceedings with evident anxiety.

Already the only boat left afloat belonging to the schooner had turned back and was making with all speed for the spot, but the most sanguine realized that it would not get there in time to be of any service.

But the dwarf, Broadsides, was still on deck.

More than that, his pet gun was loaded, and his nerve was as cool and steady as ever.

He saw the danger, and with a chuckle of satisfaction at his own skill, he sprang to the gun.

To train it and fire it was the work of a moment.

His boasted skill had not failed him.

The foremost of the three boats, which was by that time within thirty feet of the negro and his burden, was struck amidships and instantly knocked into a thousand pieces.

The darky grinned when he saw the effect of the shot.

"But two left, an' dey'll be heah afore dat feller kin shoot agin," he muttered. "I 'specks I kin manage 'em."

He was still treading water when the foremost of the two remaining boats drew nigh.

A man stood up in the bow and leveled a pistol at his head.

"Surrender!" he cried.

"Does I look as dough I war gwine ter fight?" replied Don. "Jes' take de capting an' den I'll crawl in."

The other boat, realizing that there was no need for them to linger, and having a wholesome fear of that dreadful gun on the deck of the schooner, was making all possible speed for the shore.

Don purposely conducted himself in a very clumsy manner, while the men were endeavoring to haul Hal Hawkwing into the boat, and thus managed to delay them.

By that means he gained time enough for the other boat to get quite a distance away.

At last Hawkwing was pulled over the gunwale.

"Dar now!" ejaculated Don. "Gib dis chile a han'."

"Not much!" cried the man, who had helped the chief into the boat; and at the same time he raised an oar high over his head, intending to strike the negro.

But Don was too quick for him.

Seizing the gunwale of the boat in his powerful hands, he gave it a violent jerk.

It was well done, but quickly done.

The next instant the entire crew were struggling in the water, while the boat was floating bottom-side up.

Don laughed loudly as he saw the effect of his stratagem.

Then diving like a fish, he again seized the chief in his muscular grasp, and, swimming with him beneath the water as far as he could, came to the surface well out of their reach.

The boat which had put back was nearest now, and in a moment more the big black and the chief were drawn into it, and then rowed quickly towards the schooner.

But another danger had in the meantime presented itself.

The schooner, which had been anchored so that the guns of the shore battery could not play upon her, had, since her cable was cut, drifted in far enough so that the gunners there opened fire.

Just as Don and the captain were assisted over the side, a shot from the battery tore away fully ten feet of the rail close to where they were.

Hawkwing was still unconscious, and was hastily borne to the cabin.

Every officer of importance had been lost in the terrible fight that had just taken place, and there was no one aboard the Red Privateer capable of directing affairs.

No one, did I say?

Stop! for at that instant a sharp, clear voice rang out the necessary commands, and although it was a strange one, the men flew instinctively to obey it.



"Haul in the sheet ropes!" cried the voice. "Up with your helm, there! Now jibe her—jibe, I say!"

It was a dangerous thing to do, but there was not a sailor on the deck who did not instantly realize that it was the only thing under the circumstances.

Even as they leaped to their places and seized halyards and sheets to ease the strain as much as possible as the great sails flew around with the speed of lightning, they gazed in wonder toward the poopdeck, from whence came those quick and sailor-like commands.

There stood Juanita, her brilliant eyes sparkling with animation, and her whole aspect that of one who is capable of commanding, and meant to do so.

The gallant schooner swung around without let or hindrance.

The strain was terrific, for jibing is at all times a hazardous undertaking, but she withstood the perils, and by the time that the third shot had been fired from the shore battery she was again out of range of the guns.

"Forward there!" again cried Juanita, when she saw that they were out of reach of immediate peril.

"Ay—ah!" came the quick answer from every pair of lungs aboard the schooner.

"Send the gunner aft!"

"Ay—ay!"

"Lay the schooner to!"

"Ay—ay!"

"Hold her there. If she begins to drift back again, give her a little headway!"

"Ay—ay!"

In the meantime, Broadsides, with a grin upon his features, had shuffled to the poopdeck.

"Your name?" said Juanita, sharply.

Broadsides, ma'am."

"Where are your officers?"

"Dead, ma'am; that is, 'cept the chief an' yersilf."

"I am not an officer."

"Well, by the powers, ye should be, by the same token."

"What were the crew doing aboard that bark before the fight?"

"Lookin' for the cap'n av it an' a young leddy wot he stole, bad cess to him!"

"Were they found?"

"The b'ys say as how the cap'n wa'nt there, an' thet the young leddy is dead in the cabin, ma'am."

"Broadsides, do you see that battery?"

"Oi do."

"Can you silence it with your gun?"

"Oi kin, begob!"

"Do so."

"Ay, ay, ma'am."

Without another word the Irish dwarf turned away, and presently the loud report of his gun demonstrated how quickly he had got to work.

Ably had he earned the soubriquet of the "wizard of the gun."

Not a shot did he fire but went true to its aim.

In less than an hour from the time when Juanita had given the order, it could be seen that every man at the battery had deserted his post.

"Cease firing!" cried the girl. "At the helm, there!"

"Ay, ah!"

"Let her fall off three points."

"Ay, ah!"

"All hands stand by with the grappling hooks."

"Ay, ah!"

"Don!"

"Yes, missy."

"When the schooner touches the bark board her."

"Yes, missy."

"Dive below into the cabin and bring to me the young lady whom you will find there. Be quick about it."

"Yes, missy."

The schooner rounded up until she glided along close to the rail of the bark.

"Ready, all! Cast!" cried Juanita.

The grappling hooks flew out, and at the same instant the negro Don leaped through the air and landed safely upon the deck of the other vessel.

At that moment there came a loud report from seaward, and, turning with startled looks, the crew of the Red Privateer saw a huge frigate bearing down upon them.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE QUEEN OF THE SEA.

It was plainly to be seen that a great emergency had suddenly arisen, and one which was rife with impending peril.

Only the outlines of the frigate could be seen, for she was yet without the circle of light made by the blazing fire on the shore.

But the question of her nationality was of little importance under the circumstances.

Certain it was that the Red Privateer would be considered a pirate and treated as such.

Ay, the law of nations would unquestionably proclaim her such, for she was without authority to carry arms, and as a matter of fact represented no authority but that of her commander.

Juanita knew nothing of that. She did not even know what the schooner really was to which she had flown for protection.

Whatever her quick mind conjectured in that moment of danger will appear later.

The one idea uppermost in her mind was that, no matter to what nation the frigate belonged, she must be outwitted and the schooner must flee.

Scarcely two minutes passed before Don was again on deck.

In his brawny arms he bore the body of Irma as though it had been a feather.

"Quick, Don!" cried Juanita, and he obeyed.

To leap to the schooner's deck was the work of a second, and then the clear tones of the girl once more rang out commandingly:

"Off with your hooks!" she cried. "Hard a' starboard with your helm!"

"Ay, ay!"

"Haul in on your sheets! That's right! Now ease her off a little! Good!"

The first gun from the frigate had evidently been intended simply as a note of warning, but as the schooner gathered headway and started directly across the big ship, as though she meant to run her down, another loud report issued from one of her ports, which was an unquestionable order to lay to.

"Men!" cried Juanita, "to your places, everyone! Stand ready to obey my orders instantly. If you are quick, we will give the frigate the slip."

"Ay—ay!" they cried hoarsely.

Already they were beginning to look upon this girl commander with awe, and to wonder if she were not an angel who had suddenly dropped into their midst to deliver them from the threatening perils which surrounded them.

"Lay to!" came in thundering tones from an officer on the deck of the frigate, who, trumpet in hand, leaped into the rigging.

"Ay—ay!" roared Don in reply, speaking at the dictation of his mistress.

But Juanita had calculated the situation to a nicety.



The frigate was a huge vessel, and had considerable headway when her own sails were backed.

On the other hand, the schooner was rushing through the water like a greyhound when she gave the order to lengthen out the sheetropes, thus causing her to lose her headway.

The whole thing was so nicely calculated that by the time the two vessels were nearly stationary, the Red Privateer had passed beyond the reach of the frigate's frowning ports and could only be reached by the long gun at the stern.

Juanita also had a plan in her mind for rendering that same gun useless, and she sent for Broadsides while the vessels were nearing each other.

"Broadsides," she said, "I believe you to be a wonderful marksman."

"Thankee, ma'am," replied the gunner.

"The frigate has a long gun on her stern."

"She has, ma'am."

"Can you dismount it?"

"I kin, 'ma'am."

"Very well. The firing of this pistol will be the signal for you to fire. Do you understand?"

"Ay, ah, ma'am."

"If you shoot true to your aim we will escape; if you miss they will capture us."

Broadsides touched his forelock and returned to his post, reaching it just as the required position was reached.

"What frigate is that?" cried the clear, girlish voice of Juanita, not giving the naval officer time to put the question to her first.

"The Tempest, in the service of His Majesty King George," replied the officer, pompously. "What schooner are you?"

For an instant there was silence, and then in tones as clear as a bell the voice of the intrepid Juanita rang out in this strange reply:

"A rover of the high seas; one that owes allegiance to no law but the law of good, and who despises King George and all who fawn like curs at his feet."

The explosion of a torpedo beneath the keel of his frigate would not have astonished the pompous British officer half so much as did the daring response made by Juanita to his question.

The very impertinence and boldness of it caused him for a moment to believe that he was being hoaxed.

"What?" he cried. "Beware, young sir, or you will get into trouble. Go below and send your commander on deck, or I will sink you!"

"Sink away!" cried Juanita, and at the same moment she raised her pistol and fired.

Scarcely had the echo of the report died away when the long gun which old Broadsides handled with such skill belched out its volume of smoke and fire.

The range was short and the aim was true.

The solid shot with which the gun was loaded tore away the upper portion of the frigate's afterrail, and struck the huge guncarriage aboard the man-o'-war fairly and squarely.

There were shouts and curses and a rush of feet to answer the fire, but the mischief was done, and the huge gun at the frigate's stern was for the time being utterly useless.

There were hoarse orders and the tramping of feet on board the man-o'-war, and creaking of pulley blocks, as the sailors strove to wear her around so that one of her broadsides could be brought to bear upon the schooner.

But Juanita's orders had been quick and to the point.

The sheet-ropes were hauled in, the great sails filled with wind and she bounded away towards the open sea as a bird wings over the water.

At that moment, too, the fire on shore again died out, leaving everything enveloped in total darkness.

Presently, for an instant, a bright flash lit up the harbor

and a sullen roar told that the frigate had fired a broadside, but not a ball struck the gallant schooner as she dashed away through the blackness of the night.

"Men," cried Juanita, "you have done well. I thank you. Your gallant captain, by his quick perception, saved me and my servant. In return, I think I have saved the schooner!"

"Ay—ay!" cried Broadsides. "Three cheers for the Queen of the Sea!"

They gave them with a will, and then Juanita spoke again.

"Keep the schooner on her course. I will go below and see the chief."

"Ay, ay!" they cried.

They could not have told why, and yet already they felt unbounded confidence in the strange girl, whose skill in navigation was fully equal to old Broadsides' marksmanship.

Juanita went below.

In a moment more she was standing by the couch whereon the unconscious form of Hal Hawkwing had been laid.

He opened his eyes as she entered.

By his side knelt the figure of a youth, with long hair like a girl's; but he arose instantly when Juanita entered, and seizing her hand, kissed it rapturously.

Juanita motioned him aside, and went and bent over the couch.

"Do not speak," she said to the chief. "I will dress your wound. The schooner is safe; we have left the harbor. All that you would have done has been done. The body of the young lady has been taken from the bark and is now aboard the schooner."

With a sponge and a basin of water she gently washed the ugly wound which Hawkwing had received. Then with scissors she cut away the clinging locks of hair, and in half an hour the chief was lying back much easier, with his head gently, but firmly and skillfully, bandaged by the deft fingers of Juanita.

"Who are you?" the chief managed to gasp.

"A wanderer and a refugee," she replied. "Listen, Captain Hawkwing, but do not talk. You have a severe wound, and if you would recover you must obey my directions."

Then in a low voice she told all that had happened, omitting nothing, and even through the veil of pain the eyes of the chief glistened as he heard what she said.

"A word more," she said. "You have not an officer left alive capable of sailing the schooner. If you will trust me, I will take her to a safe and sure retreat; a place which I alone of all living beings know to exist. It is an island in the sea, surrounded by high cliffs and protected by innumerable reefs. There you can recover your strength in peace. Do you wish me to take the schooner there?"

"Yes," he muttered, and then he had fainted again.

Leaving him to the care of the youth, Juanita returned to the deck.

She seemed tireless in her energy and endurance.

Day was just dawning as she stepped forth before the crew.

At the same instant there was a cry from the maintop.

"Sail ho!"

"Where away?" cried Juanita, leaping to the rail.

"Dead astern," was the answer.

It was the frigate. She had followed the schooner out in the darkness, and by luck only had kept upon her wake.

Every sail was spread, and all saw that the schooner's speed was to be tested to the utmost.

## CHAPTER VII.

### BECALMED AND PURSUED.

The frigate was so far astern of the schooner that any execution by firing was totally out of the question.

More than that, while the huge frigate did not seem to fall behind in the chase, neither did she gain, and that too, with



the schooner exerting herself to but little more than one-half of her sailing capacity.

The thoroughly practiced glance of Juanita quickly discovered this fact, and she knew beyond question that, barring accidents, it would be an easy matter for the Red Privateer to distance her pursuer, when the right moment should come.

Feeling no apprehension, she went below again, after acquainting the men with the chief's desire—that the direction of the schooner should be left in her hands until such time as he could resume it himself.

That they were entirely satisfied to trust themselves in her hands she quickly saw, and that she was in every way worthy of their confidence they had not a doubt.

Even the negro Don had, since his gigantic exploit in saving the life of their chief, become exalted into a hero, of which fact, be it said to his credit, he seemed, outwardly at least, to be entirely unconscious.

All day long the chase continued, the relative positions of the two vessels remaining unchanged.

The frigate kept doggedly upon her course, neither gaining nor losing, while the schooner, as though she were a thing of life and conscious of her superiority of speed, bounded gaily along, awaiting only the word of command to gather herself and flit quickly away from the persistent foe.

It was the fawn speeding from the elephant—the rabbit running from the bear.

When night settled down there was no change beyond the fact that to the practical senses of the sailors the wind seemed to be dying away.

It was true.

A dead calm awaited them, and that seemed ominous, for in such an event small boats crowded with men would put out from the frigate's side.

Their fears were realized.

Scarcely had the sun been set an hour when the wind died out entirely, and the schooner rocked like a cradle upon the long, dead swell of the sea.

As the sun went down, the moon rose, flooding the water with its light, and by the aid of a powerful glass Juanita could see that preparations were already being made aboard of the frigate for an attack in small boats.

But they were several miles away; much time would be consumed in the journey from the frigate to the schooner, and during that time much might happen.

It was a moment of great responsibility for the fair young girl, and she felt it fully.

More than that, she knew that she must accept and meet it.

There was no one to relieve her of the burden, and upon her frail shoulders rested the weight of capture or escape.

She looked at the sky.

"What would I not give for but six hours more of wind," she murmured. "But there is not a cloud to be seen; this calm will continue until sunrise, and then—what then?"

At that moment the little square figure of old Broadsides shuffled back to where she was standing near the companion-way. He touched his cap respectfully.

"Speak, Broadsides," said Juanita. "What is that you have to say?"

"The min hev been talkin', ma'am," said the Irishman, "and by the same token they air dead sartin that we can't lick thim spalpeens wot's comin' in crowds ter board us."

Juanita's face paled perceptibly.

"Do you mean to say," she inquired coldly, "that they prefer to surrender—that they will not fight?"

"Not a bit av it, ma'am. Ther byes ain't built that way, so they ain't."

"What then?"

"Down below in the hold, the chief has some swapes."

"Some what?"

"Swapes—oars, ma'am."

"Ah! Go on."

"Well, the byes air purty tired, an' there ain't as many av 'em as there was afore the foight, but by the same token they do belave that there's enough, an' onyhaw they're willin' ter thry, do ye moind?"

"That is good, Broadsides. Give orders at once to get out the sweeps. Let the men man them as they will. Tell them that upon the strength and endurance of their muscles depends the safety of the schooner, their lives, and the life of their chief."

"An' yours, ma'am."

"Never mind me, Broadsides. My life is not worth much to them or to anyone."

"Beg your pardon, ma'am, but av ye give sich orders as thim thar'll be a mutiny aboard the schooner in no time. Ye've been elected Queen o' ther Say; don't forgit that."

"Thank you, Broadsides, I will not. Now to the sweeps. Out with them, and work with a will. The distance is so great that perhaps they will relinquish their plan of attack when they see that this is likely to be as long a stern chase as the other."

"It gives us another chance," she muttered, when the gunner had left her side. "We can keep far enough ahead of them so that if they persist in following, the wonderful skill of Broadsides can wreck their boats one after another. If we were motionless upon the water awaiting their approach, were he twice as quick as he is in the management of his gun, he could not hit more than three out of the seven before they'd be upon us."

The men worked with a will.

In a surprisingly short space of time the long sweeps had been brought up from the hold and thrust through the blocks intended for them.

The schooner was so light, and fashioned after such a perfect model, that the huge blades of the giant oars propelled her almost as swiftly as the crews from the man-of-war could row their small boats.

Through her glass, Juanita could see that the enemy were redoubling their exertions.

They had seen the effort which the schooner was making to escape, and they were resolved to foil it if possible.

Hour after hour the battle of muscle and endurance was kept up.

Owing to the recent fight, the schooner was short-handed, but the men were working for freedom, for life—ay, more—for the sake of the gallant girl who had already won their hearts by her bravery, her pluck and her knowledge of navigation.

Don seemed never to tire. He did not once desist, except to run from one sweep to another, spelling this man or that who seemed to be giving out.

Even the cook had left his galley and the steward his pantry, in order to participate in the general effort, while Juanita herself stood at the helm, her hands firmly grasping the spokes, and aiding by a careful direction of the schooner every ounce of strength which was applied to the sweeps.

Still the small boats gained, there was no doubt of that, and they kept doggedly on.

An hour passed.

The frigate had long since been lost to view, but the boats were in sight, and only a little more than a mile away.

Soon, too soon, they would be sufficiently near for a shot from Broadside's gun to search them out.

Every effort had been strained to such a tension, and every eye so centered upon the boats, that not one had thought to look skyward.

The very first intimation that Juanita had of a change in



the weather was upon seeing the pursuing boats suddenly turn about and start with even greater exertion upon the back track.

At the same instant a sullen roar like the moaning of a horde of gigantic beasts shook the heavens.

Startled, she looked hastily in the opposite direction.

The sky was as black as ink.

Sky and water seemed to meet in one mighty and impenetrable wall of darkness, which was only relieved by a line of white foam which extended all along the way, as if to show where sea and sky were separated.

There was no mistaking it.

The approaching tempest was one of those terrors which in the Indian ocean they call by the name of typhoon.

There was not a moment to lose.

"In sweeps!" she cried, with all her strength. "Shorten sail for your lives! Bare poles only!"

The men sprang to obey.

The sullen roar of the approaching wind increased until it was a deafening shriek of fury.

Waves, mountains high, rushed at the schooner from seaward, with the apparent power to smash her into chips.

"Down! Down! Everyone!" cried Juanita. "Hang on for your lives!"

Then the tempest struck.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE PIRATES' ISLE.

In the excitement of the moment it seemed as though every man there thought only of himself.

At least, every man but old Broadships.

But for him Juanita must have been left alone at the wheel, notwithstanding the fact that her frail strength was totally inadequate to manage the wheel in that wild burst of elementary fury.

Just as the storm burst upon them—or rather in the last fraction of an instant before it burst—the gunner realized the peril as well as the bravery of the Queen of the Sea.

With a quick bound he reached her side, and seizing a rope, he had the next instant wound it round and round her, lashing her firmly to the wheel.

Then his own iron hand seized the spokes, and the storm was upon them.

For an instant it seemed as though the history of the Red Privateer must end then and there; as though the very first onslaught of the storm must swamp her.

But she bore up bravely and in a trice was dashing away like a greyhound over the back track, straight for the point where they had last seen the frigate.

We will not weary the reader by a detailed account of that most terrible tempest.

The schooner dashed on and on, and once they felt a violent shock as she coursed upon her way.

She had passed so near to the huge frigate that they had touched.

But the hand of Providence was in the storm.

In an hour it was over and passed, and the Red Privateer was once more floating like a duck upon the water, with the moon again shedding its yellow glory over all.

Not a timber had been strained beyond its tension; not a nail had been torn; not a life had been lost.

It was marvelous.

Juanita took the glass and eagerly searched the surface of the sea, but not a thing obstructed her vision.

There was no sign either of the frigate or of any of its boats.

They had doubtless been swamped; but what of the great ship?

Had she, too, been lost in that frightful gale?

But the tempest was past.

It had left in its stead a good sailing breeze, and the schooner was soon again upon her course, bound for the rendezvous to which Juanita had referred.

About the middle of the following forenoon land was sighted.

Juanita sprang into the rigging.

"Men!" she cried, "yonder lies our haven of refuge from all danger. The combined fleets of the world could not dislodge us from yonder isle. You shall see that I speak truly."

They cheered lustily in reply.

"Yas, Missy Nita," replied the black.

"Do you remember the waters here?"

"Specks I does, Missy Nita."

"Can you pilot the schooner in through the breakers as in the old days?"

"Specks I kin, Missy Nita."

"To the bow then, and do so."

"Yas, missy."

When you pass the reef, we will go ashore and open the gate."

The negro took his place in the chains.

From time to time his deep bass voice would ring out, and the helmsman instantly obeying, the schooner would glide safely past a dangerous rock against which it had seemed, but a moment before, she must be dashed into pieces.

The sailors looked on in awe.

Many of them thought, time after time, that the schooner must strike, but she ever glided safely past the seemingly impossible barriers, and not once did she even scrape her timbers against the rough and jagged edges of the sunken reef over which the water was seething and boiling in impotent rage and fury.

At length the reef was passed.

The schooner, with sails down, rode at peace behind the fearful reef.

Then it was that Juanita ordered out the captain's boat.

Motioning to Broadships and Don to follow, she stepped into it.

The negro seized the oars and the boat was soon shooting swiftly through the water towards the high and seemingly impregnable cliff with which the island was entirely surrounded to the height of a hundred feet.

The island, which was nearly round and not more than a quarter of a mile in diameter, looked from the sea to be nothing more than a huge rock thrown up there by some subterranean convulsion.

It was entirely surrounded by deep water, and old Broadships, as he gazed upon it, could not help wondering where they were to make a landing.

But Juanita said no word in explanation.

The negro rowed them straight toward the highest part of the cliff, rowed on until the boat actually bumped against the rock.

Then the Queen of the Sea, who was in the bow, arose in her place and seized an iron ring fastened in the—rock?

No. Much to the old gunner's astonishment, the ring was attached to a square piece of plank which came away as Juanita pulled upon it, disclosing a hole not much larger than her hand.

Old Broadships rubbed his eyes in wonder and looked again.

Juanita had thrust her arm through the aperture and seemed to be exerting all her strength to overcome some obstacle.

At length she succeeded.



Then, motioning to Don, the negro stepped forward, grasped the edges of the square opening and pulled with all his strength.

As the negro pulled, a portion of the seeming rock about the size of an ordinary barn door swung slowly ajar, opening to the Irishman's astonished vision that which seemed a veritable Eldorado. From the schooner's deck the sailors had watched the maneuvering with scarcely less surprise and awe than the Irishman.

But when they saw the door swing open; saw the boat containing Juanita, Broadsides and the negro, glide through and disappear; when they saw the mysterious doorway close again, thus leaving nothing but the blank wall of the cliff in view, their astonishment knew no bounds, and more than one felt a superstitious terror creep over him.

But even a greater surprise was in store for them. When the boat passed through the opening Broadsides discovered that they were floating in a small but deep cove, or bay, which, in area, was about one-fourth of the entire island. Before them was a beach which sloped upwards to grass and trees and tropical flowers. Half-way up the hill was a house built of stone and surrounded by walks long since overgrown with plants and weeds.

Off to the left were the ruins of two more buildings made of stone and mud.

The ground from the bay sloped gradually upward in every direction until it reached a level or plateau, elevated some fifty feet from the surface of the water.

Beyond that on every side arose the high and rocky cliff raised by the hand of Nature—or by the unknown power of a subterranean volcano, like a stockade around the entire circuit of the island.

Broadsides looked again at the cliff through which they had passed by the narrow doorway.

He was about to remark what a pity it was that the schooner could not be brought into that bay, when the words suddenly died upon his lips.

The cliff through which they had made their way with such ease was not of rock. He saw that at a glance. It was artificial. It was fashioned by the hand of man. The entire portion which separated the bay from the open sea was made of wood. From the inside that was plainly to be seen. From the outside it had not once been suspected, for there it was painted to represent rock, and upon it in various places were planted shrubs and moss, and such vegetation as one will find growing upon the face of cliffs where Time deposits a bit of soil.

"Come!" cried Juanita. "There is work to do."

The boat was rowed to the beach.

They quickly debarked, and herself leading the way, they mounted to a platform where a rusty windlass was located.

Don seized one of the handles and fitted it into place.

Juanita pointed to the other, and signified to Broadsides to follow the example of the negro.

Then they worked. But the chains were rusty from long disuse. At last, however, the gigantic strength of the two men started them. They creaked and groaned, and then began to wind slowly on the windlass head.

"Look!" cried Juanita.

Broadsides raised his eyes. Then he rubbed them in surprise. The cliff which separated the bay from the open sea had parted in the middle and was swinging open.

## CHAPTER IX.

### THE QUEEN'S MYSTERY.

Notwithstanding the great astonishment which Broadsides felt as he gazed over his shoulder, he was in no way deceived.

That part of the cliff which separated the bay from the open sea was moving.

It had parted in the middle, as two huge doors might have been made to do, and each section was swinging inwards.

But if Broadsides was astonished, imagine the surprise felt by those who were still aboard of the schooner. Many of them became at once filled with superstitious terrors, but ere they had time to manifest their fears by any outward demonstration, the little boat that had conveyed Juanita and the others to the island shot out of the cove, and was rowed hastily toward the schooner.

The sight of their friends reassured those who had felt the cold shivers of superstition creeping over them, and they were welcomed upon the deck with loud shouts.

As soon as she reached the deck Juanita hurriedly issued her orders. The sweeps were shipped and manned, and soon the Red Privateer was lying peacefully at anchor in the bay behind the cliff. The great doors were closed, and everyone recognized the fact that not even the tops of the tall and tapering masts could be seen from the sea.

"Men," said Juanita, when everything was made taut and safe, "we have revealed the existence of this place to you all because you fought so gallantly to protect me from my enemies, and because your noble chief so nearly sacrificed his life for mine. Here we will remain and nurse him back to health again. Those ruins there," and she pointed toward the buildings near the beach, "can easily be remodeled and made habitable. To Broadsides I delegate that duty. Look to him for your orders until your captain shall have recovered sufficiently to direct you himself. You may begin work upon the buildings at once, or as soon as you have had some rest. The house up yonder in the grove is mine, and there Captain Hawkwing shall be borne, and there I will nurse him back to health. Don will go with me now to put it in order."

The men gave her three hearty cheers when she had finished speaking, and at once Juanita, accompanied by the black, repaired to the castle, as we will hereafter designate the house.

They entered by the front door, which was not locked, and found themselves in a spacious hallway. Time and neglect had wrought sad havoc with the gorgeous hanging and furniture but there was still substance enough left, so that the work of cleansing and brushing performed by Don made a wonderful change.

There was a library filled with shelves, which in turn were covered by books from all quarters of the globe.

Some of them were musty from long disuse, but the quick hands of Don renovated them entirely.

Above the shelves was arranged a perfect arsenal of arms of all patterns and sizes.

The dining-room, which they next entered, was almost undisturbed, except by dust. The table was spread, and many evidences of the greatest refinement were strewn about. A decanter, still more than half full of wine, was there.

On the second floor there were four large rooms, and one of them was a lady's beautiful boudoir.

Having been securely closed when it was abandoned, even the dust had not penetrated there. By some paradox of nature the natural dampness had also been excluded.

A velvet carpet covered the floor; great soft divans were tastefully and conveniently located; paintings and engravings hung upon the walls; a guitar stood in one corner; books were upon the center table, and one, open, as though hastily cast aside, was lying face down upon one of the luxurious couches.

Juanita brushed a tear from her eyes hastily as she looked around her.

"Don," she said, "I never thought to see this spot again. I thought that I would never care to do so, but I am glad that I came—yes, very glad, Don."



The huge negro gazed tenderly at his mistress. His great eyes shone and it could be plainly seen how he worshiped her.

"Missy Nita will use dis yere room?" he inquired.

"Had we not better bring the chief here?" she asked in reply. But the black shook his head emphatically.

"You know what is in here," he said, "an' so does Don. Dis must be your room, honey, or Don'll mutiny, shore nuff! De oder room is jes' es good."

"Well," she said, "we will look at it."

They crossed the hall and entered another apartment of the same size. The appointments were fully as luxurious, but of a kind more befitting a man's tastes. A quick inspection satisfied Juanita that the negro was right. The room was dry, and in every way fitting for the reception of the captain of the Red Privateer.

It was decided that they should bring him there, and while Don busied himself in putting things to rights, and in making the castle in every way homelike and comfortable, Juanita returned to the schooner.

Willing hands assisted her, and soon the wounded chief was comfortably installed in his new quarters.

But another and a sadder duty awaited their attention—the burial of Irma. In a few quiet words Juanita told the chief that his sister had been brought there, and that they would bury her where she could forever sleep beneath the glowing sun, and the blooming flowers of Volcano Island—for such, she said, was the name of the place.

But before she was consigned to the keeping of Mother Earth Irma's remains were borne into the presence of the chief. He gazed long and earnestly at the sweet, dead face, then murmured something which none but Juanita heard, and motioned to them to take her away.

And when she was laid in her grave and the mound had been raised over her body, Juanita knelt there alone and prayed long and earnestly. It was Irma's only funeral service, but it was real and tender, and filled with pleading love.

\* \* \* \* \*

At the end of a month much had been accomplished on Volcano Island.

Hal Hawkwing, the chief, had entirely recovered from the effects of his wound, and was among his men again.

The ruins of the sailors' quarters had been rebuilt, and they had their mess-room, their kitchen, their lounging-room, and their sleeping apartments in perfect order.

Volcano Island was again what fancy might have pictured it in days gone by. What that was everyone wondered: But the only ones who could have enlightened them upon the subject did not speak.

Don had been often questioned by the men, but he always shook his head, grinned and said:

"Golly! dis yere chile's got er mighty pore memory, shore nuff!" and they had to be contented.

Broadsides' curiosity upon the subject so far got the better of him that he one day screwed up his courage to the point of asking Juanita. She turned upon him with flashing eyes.

"Broadsides," she said, coldly, "let it suffice that you are here, and that this place is a sure and a safe retreat and let no one dare to question me further. Let the men understand this, and see that you do not forget it yourself."

After that they looked upon their Queen of the Sea with more awe than ever before.

But Hawkwing realized two important things. One was that he must in some way add to his crew, for he was short-handed, and the other was that the men had lived a life of idleness and ease long enough.

By common consent the title of "Queen" had been conferred upon Juanita, and they one and all so addressed her.

"Queen," said the chief, one morning "the schooner sails to-day. Had you not better go with her?"

"I think not," she replied. "But why do you ask?"

"If accident should happen—if I should be captured—you would never be able to leave this island."

Juanita smiled strangely but made no comment, only to say that she would remain upon the island.

He urged her, however, and at last she said:

"You have a work to do. I can read in the stars that you will succeed. Go, therefore, without fear, for you will return, and you will find me here awaiting you."

Soon the Red Privateer departed, but no sooner was she out of sight than Juanita called Don to her side.

"Now, Don," she said, "you must go."

"Yes, Missy Nita," replied the black.

"How long will it take you?"

"Four days to go, three to git back."

"And the boat?"

"Am ready, Missy Nita."

"Go, then, and with all speed, for much depends on you now."

An hour later and Juanita was the sole occupant of the isle.

## CHAPTER X.

### DECLARATION OF WAR.

For an hour or more Juanita stood upon the cliff watching the small boat with its lateen sail, which was bearing the negro, Don, away.

But where had the boat been concealed that none suspected its presence—and why had its existence been kept secret?

Don knew perfectly well where to find it when he wanted it, and not one of the entire crew of the Red Privateer had once suspected that there was such a thing as a boat upon the island.

Juanita knew, however, and so did Don.

The reasons that she had for sending her negro protector away from her, and remaining alone upon the island, must have been important ones, for really it was a perilous situation in which she found herself.

The schooner gone, and momentarily in danger of meeting with capture or destruction; the negro, Don, gone, trusting himself to the mercy of the wind and waves for days in an open boat, and the only boat, too, which was at her disposal.

Last, but not least, she alone upon that island in the ocean, from the highest point of which not another sign of land could be distinguished.

Alone?

Stop! As she turned from her lofty vantage ground to make her way slowly and thoughtfully toward the castle, a pair of piercing, twinkling black eyes watched her every move from behind some bushes at the foot of the cliff.

They twinkled and blazed, never seeming to wink in the eagerness of the constant stare which they bent upon her, never losing a motion that she made, as she wended her way slowly and thoughtfully along the path which led from the spot which they called Point Lookout to the castle.

Ay, and as she moved along the path, they followed her; now out openly and hastening along in her footsteps as if to arrest her progress, then suddenly darting again among the bushes, to be lost in the leaves and flowers that lined the pathway.

The black eyes never once lost sight of her until she had entered the house and closed the door.

Ay, and she barred and bolted it also.

As for Juanita, she went at once to her own little boudoir, where for many moments she sat wistfully thinking.



At length she murmured:

"Four days to go and three to return. That makes seven. That makes in all one week. I will not grow impatient until fourteen days have passed. If at the end of two weeks Don has not returned I will believe that he is lost."

\* \* \* \* \*

The Red Privateer bounded away over the ocean, quickly leaving Volcano Island far astern.

Her course was laid straight for Montauk Point, many hundreds of miles distant, and her cruise was destined, therefore, to be necessarily a long one.

But she was not in disguise.

Her commander despised such warfare.

The schooner was blessed by fair winds and brisk ones, and she made phenomenal time.

Hawkwing calculated that on the morning of the seventh day he would sight Montauk Point.

Several sails were seen in the distance, and once they ran near enough to a British cruiser so that the "bulldog" gave chase.

But the Red Privateer did not alter her course, or pay the slightest attention to the enemy.

She sailed so rapidly that in a few hours the cruiser gave up and drew off in disgust, resuming her original course.

But on the morning of the sixth day they met with a circumstance that delayed them for a few hours.

Soon after daylight the cry of "Sail ho!" was shouted from the top, and then was added the intelligence:

"Dead ahead!"

The chief did not for a moment think of altering his course unless compelled to do so, and he therefore mounted to the top himself, glass in hand, to make out, if possible, what manner of vessel was in his path.

A glance satisfied him.

The vessel was a brig and a merchantman—probably unarmed—and from her general rig he concluded that she was English.

In a few moments it became evident that the people on the brig had sighted the schooner, for much to the chief's surprise she went square about and started on the back track as fast as wind and sail could propel her.

"That will never do," muttered Hawkwing. "If I let her go on in that way, every vessel along the coast will hear that there is a pirate in the offing in no time, and I'll have a swarm of cruisers around me."

He gave orders to clap on sail, and presently the Red Privateer was fairly leaping through the water.

She gained rapidly upon the brig, and at last that vessel, finding that she could not escape by running, shortened sail and evidently made ready to fight as best she could.

Through the glass the chief could see the preparations going on, and he nodded approvingly.

The brig had hove to, and was evidently waiting for the red schooner to make her intentions known.

But never a gun was fired.

True, Broadside stood at his post, ready at any instant to send one of his bewitched missiles straight at any point designated, but the order to fire did not come.

Soon the vessels were within hailing distance, and then Hal Hawkwing sprang into the rigging, trumpet in hand.

"Brig ahoy!" he cried.

"Ahoy!" came the answer in good old English, but with a little nasal twang that suggested Connecticut.

"What brig is that?" continued the chief.

"Ain't got no name," came the rather strange reply. "What schooner is that?"

"The Red Privateer. Will you come aboard?"

"Well, no, ef it's all the same to you. I've got a sort o' wholesome respect fur my skin and slch."

Hawkwing laughed aloud.

"You are a Yankee, are you not?" he asked.

"You bet."

"Well, so am I. We mean you no harm. Will you come aboard now and talk with me?"

In a few moments a boyish-looking fellow sprang upon the deck of the Red Privateer.

"Jupiter!" he exclaimed, "but she can sail! An' you ain't a pirate?"

"No, sir."

"What may your name be, please?"

"It might be Captain Kidd, or Buccaneer Ben, but it is only plain Hal Hawkwing."

"Whew!" cried the Yankee boy. "Well, if you're a Yankee, you're all right; an' mebbly you'll help me out. I've got into a scrape. Ye see me an' the boys have been on the lookout ever since war was declared, and——"

"War declared!" cried the chief.

"You bet! Hain't ye heerd? Gosh! the United States of America has slapped John Bull in the eye, and——"

Hawkwing thrust out his hand.

"Young man," he cried, "you have brought me good news. Ask your favor now."

## CHAPTER XI.

### A DESPERATE CHANCE.

The Yankee boy looked at the chief in surprise.

"Ye didn't know it, eh? Oh, yes, Jonathan got tired o' John, and they've dissolved partnership, an' the hull coast is alive with British cruisers. I thought you were one."

The chief smiled.

"My name is Reuben Carwell," continued the boy. "They call me Rube for short. You kin, if you want to."

"All right, Rube. Go on."

"See that ship?"

"Yes; I've been looking at her for some time."

"She's been a-layin' in a cove on the Connecticut shore fur more'n a week, an' me an' the other fellers have had our eyes onto her. She's British."

"I thought so."

"Did, eh? Well, she is, or rather she was. She's Yankee now."

"Ah! I see."

"Glad of it. Night afore last we dropped onto her, fired the crew overboard, cut the cable, hoisted the sails, and started out. We war makin' fur New London, where the Continentals are, but somehow we lost our reckonin', an' when you started in to overhaul us, we made up our minds that you meant fight, an' so we got ready. If you kin help us into New London, mebbly Washington could make some use of the brig. See?"

"Yes, I see. You are a brave boy, Rube. How many have you in your crew?"

"Just thirty, countin' me."

"How would the boys like to ship on the Red Privateer?"

"They'll be with you to a man. We was goin' to enlist or do something, but ef you'll help us to get the brig into New London——"

"I will take her there for you, and I will see that you get due credit for your heroic capture. Then I will apply for my letter of marque, and you and your friends shall sail with me."

"Return to your brig now, Rube, and follow me. To-night, if it is dark, we will lay to."

The programme was carried out to the letter.

They sailed straight for New London, arriving there without accident or interruption of any kind.

The brig was turned over to the new Congress, but not one



of the boys would accept any prize money for her. They said that they did not want it.

Much to Rube's delight, he received an autograph letter from General Washington, thanking him for the services that he and his friends had performed for the new government.

With it came the letter of marque for the Red Privateer.

Great was the astonishment which her presence created in the minds of the country people in the neighborhood of New London, and many shook their heads sagely and murmured that they thought the word Privateer, in her case, only another way in which to spell pirate.

However, Hal Hawkwing did not care for such things, and he soon hoisted his sails and sped for Montauk Point.

After making harbor near the point, the chief embarked in a small boat, accompanied only by Broadships and the youth who had watched over him so tenderly when he was wounded in the fight at Havana.

Rube, who was really a good sailor, had been made mate of the Red Privateer, and to him was left the care of the schooner during the absence of the chief.

The small boat drew up in a little cove from which a steep path led up among the rocks.

Leaving Broadships in the boat, the chief took the youth by his hand and disappeared.

They followed the path wearily a mile, at last halting before a house built of stone which stood almost concealed in the trees which surrounded it.

Night was just descending when the chief rapped loudly on the door with the butt of his pistol.

In a moment more a little stream of light shot out upon them through an auger hole in the door, and a gruff voice asked querulously:

"Who's dar?"

"Hal and Bessie," was the response.

"Lor' bress ye, honeys, ye don' say so, shore 'nuff!" cried the voice, and the door was thrown quickly open, revealing the form of an old negress standing, candle in hand, trembling with delight.

"Yes, Aunt Blossom," continued the chief, as he stepped through the doorway, "it is Hal, and I have brought Bessie with me. She has grown since you saw her."

The old negress turned and shuffled hastily into a room at the end of the wide hall.

Then she placed her candle on the table, and taking the face of her younger visitor between her great rough hands, she said:

"An' you is Bessie, dat ar' wee gal, eh? Wha' for you got dem boys' togs on, eh?"

"I had her wear them for safety, Blossom," said Hal. "But I have got no time to spare, auntie. I must be off at once. My schooner lies just behind the point, and there are many who would be glad to make a prize of her."

"No—no, honey!" cried the old woman. "For sure you'll stay a little while wiv ole Aunt Blossom when you's done been away so long."

"Not now, auntie. I have brought Bessie for you to love and care for. They will not think to search for her here."

"Not much, honey. An' ef dey does, dey won't find her. Blossom know a place ter hide in, sho' nuff."

Hal took a step nearer, and said:

"Come out with me, Blossom, I have a word to say to you."

"Good-by, Bessie," he added, taking the young girl in his arms and kissing her tenderly.

She was but a child; not more than thirteen, and she wept bitterly when he left her; but she knew that it was for the best and so bore the separation.

"Blossom," said the chief quickly when they were outside, "how is she?"

"Jest 'bout de same, honey."

"No change—no better—no worse?"

"'Bout de same, Massa Hal."

"Good-by, Blossom," he said; "be good to them both. Remember they are all I have in the world."

"No, no, honey. Dar's Missy——"

"Irma is dead, Blossom," interrupted Hal, sadly.

"Dead!" cried the old negress, starting back in terror. "Dat purty chile wot I'se toted roun' so much? She done gone died? Am she shore 'nuff dead, honey?"

"Yes, Blossom, she is dead. He did it. Say no more. 'Be good to those who are left to us."

"Dat I will, Massa Hal."

With a quick motion Hal Hawkwing bent forward and imprinted a kiss upon the withered old cheek, so black and yet so pure.

"Bless you, Blossom!" he said, and then, turning quickly, he disappeared in the darkness.

The old negress brushed two great tears from her eyes, striving to gaze after the retreating form, but the darkness had swallowed it completely.

"Dat ar's my boy!" she murmured. "An' golly! ain't ole Blossom jes' proud o' him? She shore nuff is."

Then, wiping away another tear, she re-entered the house.

Hal Hawkwing hurried to the boat where he had left Old Broadships awaiting his return, but, ere he reached the top of the bank a form arose in the darkness immediately in his path.

The chief's hand at once flew to his pistol, but the voice of the faithful Irish gunner reassured him.

"Sh!" he said in a half whisper.

"What's up, Broad?" inquired Hal, in the same cautious tone.

"Sure, the divil himself is up an' movin', too," said the gunner.

"What do you mean?"

"I was settin' in the boat a-waitin' fur ye, whin I heerd talkin'. I kim nearer, the talkin', I mane, an' I shoved the boat out till I war out o' sight in the darruk—my, ain't it darruk? Thin I drapped the little kedge anchor over, an' thin I drapped over too, begorra. The wather's cowld, but I made me fins worruk till me keel grated on the stuns, an' thin I crawled on me han's an' knees till I heerd two spalpeens a chinnin'."

"Could you hear what they were saying?"

"I could that. Sure, there's a bilin' av divils wat think the schooner was made for, thin, an' these two fellers kim down to have a look at her location, so they did. They think we're goin' ter lay there all night just fur the fun av bein' tuk, an' this hull bilin' is comin' fur us in boats, so they are."

"When?"

"Beggorra, they forgot to mention that same. To-night, though. I thought I'd wait here fur ye, thinkin' they might run into ye, see!"

"Yes, Broad. Get the boat now, quick. We must get to the schooner at once."

The gunner waded out into the water and struck out for the spot where he had left the boat, being soon lost to view in the darkness, which was intense.

Hawkwing began to think that he was gone a very long time when suddenly he heard him returning.

He was still swimming.

"The boat's drowned, cap'n!" he said, panting.

"Gone, Broad?"

"It is that!"

For an instant the chief did not know what to do. But he quickly decided.

"Broadships," he said, firmly, "we must swim to the schooner. Follow me!"

The next instant he was in the water, swimming with



powerful strokes through the darkness in the direction of the schooner.

## CHAPTER XII.

### A MYSTERIOUS COMPANION.

Although Juanita had said that she should not permit herself to grow anxious before the end of two weeks from the day when Don left her to carry out her orders, the morning of the seventh day found her upon Point Lookout, glass in hand, eagerly and thoroughly scanning the horizon.

She spent nearly the entire day in her vigil, ceasing only when darkness threw its mantle over the sea.

Then she sighed heavily and returned to the castle.

But ever and anon during the day a startled bird had flown crying from the bushes behind her.

She thought nothing of it, but could she have turned and looked suddenly back, she might have seen those two piercing eyes that were watching every motion that she made.

During every preceding day those eyes had been almost constantly upon her.

Even at night when she was sleeping soundly in the fancied security of her room, they would peer in through the curtains eagerly, expectantly, and then when satisfied that she was sleeping a form would glide stealthily about the apartment, ever and anon letting its glance fall upon the motionless figure of the Queen of the Sea.

Never a day, never a night was Juanita free from the surveillance of those strange, piercing, eager eyes.

They followed her everywhere, and yet she was in no way conscious of it.

The eighth day was passed in the same manner as the seventh, and with a like result.

The ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth came and went in the same manner.

On the thirteenth day she descried a sail, and for an hour her heart beat violently in expectation.

But it was only to meet with a disappointment at last, for it proved to be that of a French cruiser, and was soon afterwards lost to view again.

The fourteenth; the fifteenth; the sixteenth; the seventeenth.

Still was her vigil unrewarded.

Now and then a sail would appear and remain in sight for a short time, but it would soon drop out of sight behind the horizon.

The island was far out of the beaten track for merchant vessels.

At the end of the seventeenth day she became despondent.

"I was wrong to send him upon such a perilous errand," she said, speaking aloud to herself. "Poor, old faithful Don! I should not have sacrificed you—and yet it was in a glorious cause.

"Poor Don! He will never return!"

"He will return! The stars do not lie!"

Juanita started violently, and leaped to her feet.

"Who spoke?" she cried, gazing affrightedly at the bushes from whence the voice seemed to have come.

Silence was her answer. All was quiet, still.

Her heart beat violently. The shock had been severe.

"Who spoke?" she repeated, louder than before

Still no answer.

"Pshaw!" she exclaimed. "No one spoke to me! Of course not! How could they? I am alone here! It was only my fancy. I am getting nervous."

Nevertheless she looked well to the pistols which she carried

in her sash, and her step was quicker and firmer as she returned to the castle.

She even barred the door with more care than ever before, and when once within the confines of her own room she set systematically about making everything secure.

She thought it was foolish as she did so, but it made her feel easier and more secure in her loneliness when once it was done.

When she retired she could not sleep.

In spite of all her efforts her eyes remained wide open.

In the morning as soon as the sun had risen, she left the castle and repaired to Point Lookout.

The warmth of the sun and the brightness of the morning had convinced her more than ever of the folly of fearing that she was not indeed alone upon the island, so that by the time she had reached the point of vantage she was her old self again.

She was just raising the glass to her eye when she suddenly saw something which caused her to drop it to the ground and to start back with a cry of alarm.

In a crevice in the rocks at her side was a forked stick, and upon the fork thereof was a bit of paper.

The next instant Juanita leaped forward and seized the paper, but as she read she shuddered with a new fear.

There was proof positive that she was not alone upon Volcano Island, for there was a note which someone had written for her to read.

The contents were strange and startling also.

"Fear not," it said, "Don will return. The stars foretell it. But beware of the consequences of his coming."

That was all. Juanita grew hot and cold by turns.

Surprise, fear, consternation, wonder, dismay! she felt them all.

But she was brave.

Now that she knew beyond a doubt that she was not alone, she prepared herself for the enemy.

Her nervousness left her.

Instead, she became imbued with watchful caution, and was constantly upon the alert for some sign of her unknown companion in the solitude of the island.

Her pistols were ever ready, and when that night it became time to retire there was a coolness and settled purpose about her demeanor which spoke volumes.

But throughout the night nothing disturbed her.

In the morning she again went to the point, and raising the forked stick she once more fastened it in the crevice in the rock.

Upon the forks she fastened a reply.

"Whoever you are," she wrote, "it will be best that you make yourself known to me. I do not fear you, and to prove it I give you this warning. If you do not reveal your identity before the return of the schooner, the men shall search for and find you. Decide to whose mercy you can better trust yourself—theirs or mine."

She left the note there and returned to the castle

An hour later she again ascended to the lookout.

The note had been removed, and there was a reply in its place.

"When it is my pleasure," it read, "I will make myself known; not before. Let them search; they will not find me. Remember my warning. You have nothing to fear from me—now."

Nevertheless, Juanita did not relinquish her vigilance one jot.

The distance from the point where Hal Hawkwing and Old Broadbides leaped into the water to the schooner was nearly a mile.



Under ordinary circumstances a swim of that kind would not greatly try the endurance of a sailor, but it was getting late in the season and the water was unusually cold.

But Hal did not think of that.

The only thought upon his mind was that the schooner was about to be attacked, and that he was not upon her decks to direct the battle.

He was a powerful swimmer, and so was Broadsides, and their lusty strokes carried them through the water swiftly.

Suddenly the chief paused and spoke a cautious word to the gunner.

"Listen!" he said. "Do you hear anything?"

"Yis—oars."

"Where do you make them?"

"Straight away on our larboard beam."

"Right. They are heading for the schooner."

"They be."

"How many boats do you think, Broad?"

"Donno, sir. More than two, anyhow."

"Come!"

Again they dashed forward, swimming stronger than ever, but the distance was as yet little more than half made.

Soon they could hear the oars plainly.

They were getting nearer.

The swimmers and the oarsmen were converging to the point of an acute angle.

There was no light upon the schooner; such had been the orders given when the chief left.

On and on they swam with all their strength.

Suddenly a dark object loomed up in front of them, scarcely thirty fathoms distant.

It was the schooner.

At the same instant the gentle splash of the muffled oars sounded quite near.

In another moment the attack would be made.

Hawkwing's resolve was taken.

"Ahoy the schooner!" he shouted with all his strength of lungs.

"Ay, ay!" came the reply.

"To quarters! You are attacked by small boats! Lively!"

Instantly all was confusion on board the vessel, while a volley of musketry blazed from the small boats, whose occupants realized that they were discovered.

### CHAPTER XIII.

#### THE FIGHT.

No sooner had Hal Hawkwing called out the warning to his crew that they were attacked than the boats which contained the attacking party fired a volley of musketry.

Not at the schooner, but in the direction from whence came the warning voice.

They could not know that the shout came from a man in the water who had braved death in many forms in order to swim out to the schooner.

The only thought which could suggest itself to them was that a boatload of Continentals, having become apprised of their purpose, had put off to the schooner in order to both warn and assist them. Therefore that volley was fired that way.

That the words of warning had borne fruit was instantly made manifest. Rube Carwell had recognized the voice of his chief, and his orders were instantly issued.

The next moment the entire crew were on deck, armed and ready for the fray. Nor was it long in beginning.

The boats, crowded with men from the shore—Tories, as

they called them in those days—were rowed quickly to the schooner's side.

Volley after volley of musketry was fired upon her decks, and in a moment more the men began clambering up her side like bees upon a line. Not a light could be seen anywhere, except the flashing of the firearms. But the bulwarks of the schooner were already lined with men. They too had their muskets, their pistols, and their cutlasses, and woe be to the head which showed itself for an instant above the rail of the Red Privateer. There was no time to spare that might be devoted to the assistance of the chief and his gunner, and none knew it better than they.

"Come, Broad," said Hawkwing, "we will swim around to the starboard side."

They did so, unmolested, for the attacking boats were far too busily employed to devote any time to a search for them.

They reached the starboard side without accident and were soon looking for a place where they could find foothold or "finger-hold" sufficient to enable them to clamber to the deck.

As luck would have it, there was a bucket hanging overboard which had been left there by some careless sailor, who, with the other end of the line which was fastened to the rail, had taken two half-hitches around a marlin-spike in the rail.

Hawkwing found it, and, whispering a hurried word of caution to Broadsides, he went up the rope hand over hand.

In another moment he was upon the deck. Broadsides quickly followed, but the chief did not pause to note that fact. He cast one glance at the men fighting on the port rail, and, seeing that they were still holding the enemy at bay, he hurried to his cabin. In a trice he had thrown off his coat and donned the shirt of mail over his waistcoat. Then, seizing some spare weapons which were there, he ran to the deck.

During his absence, brief as it was, the attacking party had managed to gain a foothold upon the deck, and a fierce hand-to-hand fight was in progress.

Into the very midst of it dashed the chief, and not two seconds had elapsed before his men knew that he was there.

By his voice he encouraged them, and the blows which he struck fell thick and fast. Fully a dozen of the enemy gained the deck, but they were quickly beaten back.

But there were more to come. Scarcely had the one boatload been hurled backward, dead or dying, or leaping into the sea, when another and a greater one that had gone a little way aft, swarmed over the side. There was no suspicion of their intention until they were well upon the deck, and then the chief, with a few of his men to support him, turned to meet them. The collision was frightful. The enemy were led by a man who was almost a giant in stature, and who fought like a demon.

In a trice he and Hal Hawkins were engaged in a hand-to-hand fight. Their pistols were long since empty, and they had naught but their swords upon which to depend.

The fight went on at the rail and among the men for a long time, gradually becoming weaker and weaker, until finally it ceased altogether.

One side or the other had won the battle; there could be no doubt of that. Yet still the combat continued between the chief and his powerful opponent.

Suddenly there came a diversion.

Old Broadsides had crept forward upon his hands and knees, and had seized the enemy by his ankle. The next moment he had fallen in a heap to the deck, while the Irish gunner was sitting astride his form, holding him so that he could not move.

"Hold him, Broad!" cried the chief; and then he turned to see what had been the general consequence of the fight.

It was over, surely.



Of all the men who had come out in small boats to attack the schooner, not one had escaped.

Every one was either dead, wounded, or made prisoner.

It was a victory, which, but for the timely warning, must have been a signal defeat.

Orders were quickly given to "up anchor and make sail," and to "lay the course sou'east by south," and then the chief turned once more to Broadsides, who was still sitting astride the prostrate man.

"Have you disarmed him, Broad?" asked the chief.

"Ay, ay, sur."

Has he surrendered like a man?"

"No," replied a sullen voice, which caused Hawkwing to start violently.

"I think I recognize your voice," he said, quietly.

"If you don't you're a fool," replied the man gruffly.

For an instant the chief mused without speaking.

At length he said, still as quietly as before:

"If you will answer three questions truthfully, and now, you shall be set free at once. If you refuse, I will hang you in half an hour. Which shall it be?"

"I'll hang, thank you!" replied the prisoner, coolly.

"So be it," returned the chief. "I shall not ask you again. You know what I would ask. If, while the rope is being made ready, you would change your mind, say so. Otherwise I will keep my word."

"Would you rather see me hang than to wait yet longer for your information? If you knew positively that I would tell you all within a month, would you not let me live?"

"Yes, and no. Speak or die. You shall take but one of the two paths."

"Hang me, then, curse you!"

Hawkwing turned and strode away.

Presently the noose was prepared and thrown over the prisoner's head, while he was placed upon his feet ready for the execution.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### BARRED OUT.

The schooner was bowling along at a merry pace, but the scene upon her deck beggars description.

A half hundred of smoke-begrimed and battle-scarred men standing in a circle which was lighted by two ship lanterns.

In the center of the ring a sullen, morose-looking man, a perfect giant in stature, with a noose around his neck, and a rope leading from it to a pulley-block over his head.

Behind him Old Broadsides and three assistants with the rope in their grasp, ready at the signal to hoist the condemned prisoner aloft, and to leave him dangling there until life should be extinct.

In front of him Hal Hawkwing, watch in hand, awaiting the moment when the time for the prisoner to live had passed.

Such was the picture. It was a weird scene, and probably the most composed in manner of all who took part in it were the two who were most interested, the chief and the man with the rope around his neck.

The first was calmly regarding his watch, while the other was gazing sullenly from face to face in the group which surrounded him. His features showed not the slightest trace of fear, nor did their expression give any evidence of what was working in his mind.

Was he looking for the weakest part of that group by which he was encompassed? Was he meditating a dash for liberty?

Surely such a thought would be madness; and yet, he knew that there was no hope for him there. What man is there who

would not rather die fighting than be strung up like a cur to strangle?

"You have but one minute more," said Hawkwing, coldly, at last; "one minute more. Will you speak and go free?"

"No."

The chief closed his watch with a loud snap.

"So be it," he said. "Are you ready, men?"

"Ay—ay."

"Hoist away."

They pulled with a will, and pulled quickly, but they were not quick enough. No sooner had the order to hoist away escaped the lips of the chief, than the prisoner raised his hands quickly and tore the noose from his neck.

It was done with so much speed that none could interfere to prevent him, and the next instant he had thrown himself boldly into the circle of spectators.

They were so taken back by the effort; so totally unprepared for a move of the kind, that in the fraction of an instant which he consumed in dashing them aside, they were but as straws in his powerful grasp. In a second four of them were hurled to the deck, and in the next the prisoner had dashed through the breach thus made and reached the rail.

There he paused for just one atom of time, and uttered one loud laugh of triumph and defiance.

But it was quickly checked.

Hal Hawkwing had bounded forward in pursuit, and just as the escaping prisoner uttered his exultant laugh, he fired his pistol. The laugh ended in a cry of pain. The man tottered on the rail of the schooner. As he tottered and swayed, the chief leaped forward again, and seized him in his grasp.

But the cry of pain changed into a laugh of triumph.

The muscular, unyielding arms wound themselves around the body of the chief, and the next instant both had disappeared over the rail into the sea.

"Down with the helm! Down! down! down!" cried Rube Carwell. "Lower away a boat there! Let go the sheets! Stand by, now, all of you!"

In a moment the Red Privateer had come up into the wind, and in much less time than it takes to write it a boat had been lowered.

Not a sign of the chief or of the prisoner could be found.

Hours were spent in searching for a trace of them, but with no result. They had disappeared as mysteriously as though the sea had swallowed them at the first gulp.

Daylight came and found them still searching, and still without result, and they knew then that it was of no use.

Hal Hawkwing, the chief, was lost—drowned, they one and all believed. Sadly the boats were once more raised upon the davits, for the men both loved and respected their chief.

Every one in the crew knew that old Broadsides was more in the lost captain's confidence than anyone else, and by common consent they turned to him for advice.

Although Rube Carwell was the ostensible second in command, he, too, looked to the old gunner for counsel.

"Me byes," said Broadsides, dashing a tear from his weather-eye, "thar's but one thing fur us to do, an' that is respect his wish jist as much as we would his orders. We'll sail fur Volcano Island an' ax the Queen o' the Say to be our cap'n an' to avenge his death."

"Ay—ay! Ay—ay!"

"I know more than that, too. The chief left a package wid the Quane to be opened in case he came back dead."

On the morning of the twentieth day from the time of Don's departure from the island, Juanita was pale and haggard.

She wended her way slowly from the castle to the top of the rock and raised the glass listlessly to her eye.



Then she uttered an exclamation of pleasure, for she thought that she discerned a speck of red just rising over the water.

She placed the glass to her eye again, and looked long and anxiously. There was no mistake. It was the gaff topsails of the schooner she saw.

They were red, and they could belong to no other vessel.

The red spot grew bigger and bigger, until at last she could make out the larger sails—the main, and fore, and jib.

"It is the schooner," she murmured. "Hawkwing is returning. He will miss Don. What shall I say to account for his absence?"

"What shall I say?" she repeated. "What need I say? Is not the island mine? Was not Don my property? And yet, he will think it strange. Yet, Don may still return. Something may have happened to delay him. If he is alive he will come back. No—I will say nothing."

Nearer and nearer came the schooner, until at last her hull was plainly discernible.

"They will think it strange that Don does not open the cliff-gate for them," she murmured. "I cannot do it alone, but I can signal them from the rock to send some men ashore."

She waited until the schooner had passed the reef.

Old Broadsides stood in the bow acting as pilot.

Juanita thought it strange that Hawkwing was not upon the deck, but she began at once to make signals with her handkerchief for them to send a boat in.

Presently she succeeded in making them understand. A boat was lowered and manned, and pulled rapidly towards the cliff.

Broadsides was in the bow, and he knew where to find the arm-hole through which it was possible to throw open the small doorway by which a rowboat could enter.

The boat reached the cliff, and Broadsides thrust his hand through the opening made by dislodging the iron ring.

Presently he drew it forth with a look of surprise. He could not find the bolt on the inside. He searched again, but with a like result.

Juanita was still upon the cliff, and he called to her and told her that the door could not be opened.

"Wait!" cried Juanita, "I will go and see. It shall be open in a moment."

She sprang from her perch, intending to swim out into the cove to the doorway.

But ere she had taken a dozen steps a figure leaped from the bushes and confronted her.

A pistol was aimed at her head and a voice said sharply: "Move but one step and you die!"

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN.

There was more astonishment than fear in the first wave of surprise which Juanita felt as she was thus summarily halted while on her way to the cove for the purpose of ascertaining why the little door could not be made to open.

True, the first thought was that of fear, but, when in the person before her she saw a woman, and that woman no larger than herself, and much older, the fear gave way to astonishment.

In one brief instant she had regained her composure.

"Why do you stop me?" she asked, composedly, and without a trace of fright in her voice.

"Why?" echoed the woman, "because it is my wish that those men come not here again."

"But they will come. If I do not open the door they will scale the cliff—or worse."

"What worse?"

"Batter it down with their huge guns. They would not hesitate to do so if we sought to keep them out. You had much better permit me to allow them to enter peaceably. Listen, they are rattling at the little door in their impatience now. Don't you hear them?"

"Yes, yes, I hear," said the woman, slowly, her eager black eyes glistening with indecision.

"Who are you?" asked Juanita suddenly, bending forward and peering into the face of her companion. "I feel sure that I have seen your face before somewhere, but I cannot remember where. Who are you?"

The woman trembled visibly.

"Don would remember me," she said, "but you were too young—too young."

She had forgotten the pistol in her hand, and the arm was hanging listlessly at her side.

"Who are you?" repeated the Queen of the Sea.

"Whoever I may be, I am the sole possessor of this island," she said, looking up quickly.

"No," replied the girl, "that cannot be, for I am here."

It was a strange reply, and it had a strange effect upon the woman.

"True!" she cried, "you are Juanita, and have as much right here as I."

"What do you mean?" said Juanita. "Tell me!"

"Not now—not now."

"Go to the castle then—go to my room. Do you know where it is?"

"Yes," answered the woman, who had suddenly become strangely subdued.

"Go there then and await me. I will unfasten the door, and as soon as the men have brought the schooner in I will go to you."

Juanita spoke as though she expected to be obeyed, nor was she mistaken.

Without a word in reply, the woman turned and went rapidly towards the castle.

Juanita watched her until she disappeared. Then she ran to the shore of the cove and, without an instant's hesitation, plunged in and swam to the spot where the small door was located.

It was fastened by means of a bar which swung on a pivot at one end and fitted into a chock at the other, and for the purpose of fastening it still more securely there was a bolt or peg over the bar beyond the chock, out of reach of an arm thrust through the square opening.

This peg had hung for years unused, but Juanita saw quickly that it had lately been put in place.

It was a very easy matter to withdraw it, thus allowing the door to be opened.

Then she turned and swam again to the beach.

As soon as this impediment was removed, Broadsides threw open the door and the boat came through, the men giving three hearty cheers for the Queen of the Sea as they hurried after her.

Soon they were on shore, and in a moment the windlass was working.

The great cliff doors swung open, and presently the sweeps on board of the Red Privateer were dipped into the water, and she floated into the hidden cove.

Then the doors were closed again, and once more the gallant schooner was at rest in perfect security.

As soon as the necessary work was attended to Old Broadsides approached Juanita, who was still standing on the beach in her wet garments, wondering why the chief did not appear.

In as few words as possible the loyal Irishman related all that had occurred, concluding with the intelligence that henceforth she must be their leader and commander.



"Very well, Broadsides. In the morning—to-morrow, I will talk to the men."

Juanita turned quickly and hurried to the castle and to her own room.

She entered it, fully expecting to find the strange and unknown woman awaiting her, but the apartment was empty.

"More mystery," she murmured. "Who can that woman be? One of whom I should have heard, I am positive, and yet I have no such recollection. What is stranger still, her face brings back a memory of some kind which I cannot quite grasp.

"Ah, well, she will come to me again, and then perhaps I will learn all.

"But the chief! What of him? Can it be that the strong, self-reliant man, for whom I have conceived such a strange affection, is dead? No, I cannot believe it. And the man whom he sought to make speak—who was he? Perhaps the papers will tell me. I will read them now."

She went quickly to an ebony cabinet at one end of the room, and opened it.

It was empty.

She knew that she had put the packet there, and that there was but one person who could have taken it away.

That person was the mysterious woman, whose presence upon the island was so unaccountable.

"She has dared to steal that packet?" exclaimed Juanita.

She turned, and facing the other way, she cried out:

"Woman—woman! Whoever you are you have dared to take that to which you have no right. I care not whether you hear me or not; but if you do, mark well what I say. I will search until dark for that packet. If then I have not found it, this castle shall be torn apart, stone by stone—ay, and the vaults beneath it! The treasure which lies concealed there shall be exposed to the gaze of all the men! Nay, I will give it all to him who finds those papers for me. Think you that you can escape! No!—for even though you have burrowed beneath the rocks, I will have them torn up and you shall be discovered! Return those papers, or by the morrow you shall see your island a heap of ruins, the treasure gone, and yourself food for the vultures. I am queen here, and I will keep my word. I am queen, I say!"

As she ceased there fell upon her ears the rustle of a woman's garments, and then the strange being glided into the room and stood before her.

"Oh!" cried Juanita, "it seems that you heard me."

"Yes," answered the woman slowly. "I have brought back the packet. I have——"

She was interrupted by the loud voice of Broadsides under the window, crying:

"Queen! Queen!"

Juanita hurried to the casement.

"What is it?" she asked.

"A sail," replied the gunner, "an' a divil fur impertinence, too, axin' yer pardon. Sure she's sailed clean through the breakers widout iver scratchin' a rock, an' by the powers, they'll be openin' the cliff dures next, so they will. Hear that!"

The loud report of a huge gun crashed through the air at that instant, and Juanita, without waiting to hear more, but still holding the packet tightly in her hand, hurried from the castle.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### "MIDNIGHT" AND "MIDDAY."

Not more than three minutes had elapsed from the time when they heard the report of the gun before Juanita was at

the lookout, but already a small boat had been lowered from the vessel's side, and was being rowed towards the cliff.

As soon as she perceived who was in the boat she murmured a short prayer of thanksgiving, for standing upright in the bow was the herculean form of the loyal negro—the trusty Don.

She waived her hand to him and he replied.

"Return!" she cried. "The doors shall be opened; there is room in the cove."

Don obeyed, and the boat's head was turned.

Quickly Juanita descended from her perch, meeting old Broadsides and Rube Carwell, who were on their way to join her at the Lookout.

"It is Don!" she exclaimed, and then in a few words she told them enough so that they were satisfied to throw the great doors ajar.

In a few moments more a graceful schooner, somewhat larger than the Red Privateer, floated into the harbor and dropped her anchor.

Then the doors swung to again, while the men upon the beach gazed in absolute astonishment upon the crew of the stranger.

Every man of them was a negro. There was not a white skin among them.

"Broadsides," said Juanita, "those are all my own men. They are slaves, but as loyal and true to my cause and to my wishes as I could be myself. See, Don is coming."

Soon the faithful negro was before them.

"De boys am come," he said laconically.

"Why were you so long?" asked Juanita.

"I war cotched, Missy Nita, an' sold ober agin fur a slave, but, golly, dis chile couldn't be de slave ob two pussons ter oncet, nohow."

"You found the schooner all right, and the boys?"

"Dar dey is, all ob 'em," replied the negro.

"Very well, Don. I will thank you another time. You know your work—do it. Let everything be as black as the faces of your men."

Don turned and left them.

"Broadsides," said Juanita, "pipe all hands to the shore messroom. Say to them that I desire to say a few words."

The gunner hastened to do her bidding, while Juanita wended her way slowly to the messroom.

Presently they were all assembled, and as she walked through the room they set up a hearty cheer which was almost deafening.

"Men," she said, "I will be as brief as possible.

"On the island of San Domingo there is a large plantation which belongs to me. It is rich in resources and is people by a great number of slaves who are also my property.

"I was born upon this island where we now are, and the first home that I ever knew was here.

"Years ago I left it. I was but a child then. My father decreed that I should be placed upon the plantation under the care of Don and his wife, and that I should be reared there in forgetfulness of my former life. He was a Corsair, and because he loved me best he cast me from him. I have never seen him since. I believe that he is dead.

"Don and his wife cared for me for a few years, and then she was stolen. We could never find any trace of her; but Don remained faithful.

"He cared for the plantation and did the work which few white men could do successfully.

"But without being aware of the fact I had enemies—or at least an enemy—who was all the while plotting against me.

"Born with a great love for the sea, I had that schooner built, and the slaves were taught to be sailors as well as laborers. They loved me, all of them; they love me now."

"I was supremely happy for many years, but at last, just



one year ago, my enemy succeeded in creeping upon the plantation at night and spirited me away, so that no one knew where I had gone.

"But faithful Don was there yet, and he suspected.

"He left the plantation in charge of his assistants and went in search of me, nor did he tire until he found that I was a prisoner in Havana—kept there because I would not reveal a secret which I hold.

"Some day, perhaps, if you are all faithful, that secret may be told to you; but not now.

"Many of you were present the night when faithful Don succeeded in tearing me from my jailers, and the rest of the story you know.

"There is, however, more to tell.

"Your chief, Captain Hal Hawkwing, imposed much confidence in me. He told me of the hatred which his people felt and feel now for the yoke which King George holds over you with an iron hand.

"He told me more—much more concerning his intentions, and, since the Red Privateer has returned, you have informed me that the Colonies have arisen in their might and proclaimed a war of independence."

A loud cheer arose from the men.

"I have added my feeble strength to that struggle. I sent Don to the plantation as soon as the Red Privateer had sailed. He made the journey in a small boat over the open sea. He was captured and sold as a slave. He escaped, and he is here. He has brought with him my schooner, Midnight, and she is manned and armed. Manned by men whose skins are black, but whose hearts are white and pure, manned by slaves who know that they have but to ask to be set free; armed by loyal hearts and strong hands, and the best guns that money could purchase.

"It was my intention to have given her to your chief to help on his great work, but alas! he is not here to receive her.

"Therefore, men, I take possession of her in his name. She is to be painted as black as your vessel is red, from keelson to turrettop. Her name is Midnight, and we will christen the red schooner Midday!

"See!" and she unfolded a flag, and held it up before their gaze.

It was an exact copy of the flag which Hal Hawkwing had adopted.

It was the Stars and Stripes.

"This is our emblem. With it we will fight for liberty! Under it we will strike for freedom from oppression by a foreign power.

"But there is another and sacred duty for us to perform. Your chief has left instructions for me, and with your help we will carry them out to the end.

"You have called me queen. That title smacks of royalty, but in your hearts it means only loyalty, and therefore I accept it until our work is done.

"The Midnight is officered and Don is her commander. The Midday I will command, with Broadsides for first and Carwell for second officer.

"In three days we will sail in consort from Volcano Island, and when we return the Stars and Stripes shall be known and feared by all enemies to independence and freedom."

## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE MYSTERY DEEPENS.

Juanita made her way swiftly to the castle.

The packet was still in her hand, and she quickly locked herself in her room, and broke the seal.

All that she found there we will not here reveal, but when, just at dusk, she once more left the castle, there was a sternness about her beautiful face that had not been there before.

"Ay," she murmured over and over again to herself, "Hal

Hawkwing has left the mission in good hands. His wishes shall be carried out if Juanita lives."

Ere she had got a dozen paces the strange woman again confronted her.

"I would speak with you, queen," she said, humbly.

"An hour hence, then," replied Juanita, coldly. "In my room. Go there and wait, but see that you take nothing that does not belong to you. In an hour I will return."

Then she passed on, going straight to the beach.

A wave of her hand brought a dozen men to her side at once, and she was quickly rowed to the Red Privateer.

The key to the cabin door was placed in her hands, and entering, she closed and locked it after her.

She had brought with her the necessary tools, and the locker was quickly pried open.

Within it she found several small bundles of letters, a diary, and a statement written by the chief himself.

In one package the letters were written in the Spanish language, while in the statement made by the chief was this sentence:

"I do not understand Spanish, and, therefore, the letters which may perhaps be the most important of all I have thus far been unable to read. I do not care to trust them to an interpreter, and, therefore, I have allowed them to remain without knowing their contents."

Juanita seized upon the Spanish letters eagerly.

That language came more naturally to her than English, for she had known it from infancy.

As she read on, her eagerness changed to interest and then to surprise.

The contents of the letters overwhelmed her, for, much to her astonishment, she found that they concerned people whom she knew.

Ay, more—they concerned her personally, for the name of her father was signed to them.

On and on she read, forgetting her surroundings, time, everything, until at length, entirely overcome by her emotions, she broke down and wept bitterly.

"Hal! Hal!" she cried at last, "how little did you suspect the secret that lies hidden here!

"Ah, well! my duty is twofold now."

The other letters she also read with care, but they together with the diary, while they had been sufficient for the information of Hal Hawkwing; while they had beyond doubt been the cause of his undertaking the task that he had begun; while they indeed referred in the abstract to the contents of the Spanish letters and explained them in part, did not, however, relate the real secret.

Still they substantiated it. They proved to her mind that the others were true, had she needed the proof.

Instead of one hour, she had remained in the cabin three, but nevertheless when she reached the castle, the strange woman was there awaiting her.

"You wished to speak with me; what have you to say?" asked Juanita, sadly, for she had not yet recovered from the shock of her discovery.

"You are Juanita?" said the woman. "The daughter of—"

"The daughter of him who formerly made this island his home," interrupted Juanita; "proceed."

"Who was the girl who was buried here when that red schooner first came?"

"Her name was Irma."

"Irma what? Was she the sister or the wife of the chief of those men in red?"

"He said she was his sister."

"And who was her father?"

"Woman!" exclaimed Juanita, passionately, "I am a stranger to those people. Why do you ask me such questions?"

"Because I believe you can answer."



"I cannot—nay, I will not."

"Do you know who I am, Juanita?"

"No. Who are you?"

"I was once the queen here."

Juanita started.

"I was known as Lady Maria," continued the woman.

"Then you were the wife——"

"I was his wife, yes."

"But not——"

"No, Juanita, not your mother. Would that I were, for you are a noble girl. Your mother had been dead two years and you were yet a babe when I became his wife. Now do you know why it is that you remember my face?"

"I do. When did you leave here?"

"I fled from here at night and alone when you were less than four years old. I fled, and he did not pursue me."

"But why did you go? Tell me all."

"I went because I was wretched; but I found a greater misery, because I loved him in spite of all. Ay, and he loved me. Three years ago I returned, and I have been here alone ever since; alone until you came. I returned because I could not remain longer away. I knew he was dead, that the island was deserted, but I came, and when, one day, you came also, I thought that you meant to take away the treasure; that is why I threatened you."

"But, girl, the treasure is more yours than mine. I have thought better of it all. Take it if you wish. It is yours."

"Tell me," said Juanita, changing the subject, "do you know aught of my father's history before you came here?"

"Yes, yes," sighed Maria; "I know it all. He told me many times—many times."

"Tell me—tell me all!" cried the girl.

But Maria shook her head sadly.

"I cannot remember," she said. "It has gone from me, as clouds obscure the stars. Now and then there is a glimmer; I see one twinkling brightly in the distance, but when I try to grasp it, it is gone."

"You remember—my father?"

"Yes—oh, yes."

Juanita went quickly to her table; she procured pencil and paper and handed them to Maria.

"Take them," she said. "When your memory returns, if but for an instant, write, and write quickly. Do so from time to time. By and by you will have put down all. Will you try?"

The woman's eyes brightened.

"Yes," she cried. "I will do so. Perhaps I will so tell all the story. I think it is something that you should know—and yet I am not sure."

\* \* \* \* \*

We pass from the last scene to one which occurred nearly two months later.

The Midnight and Midday had been cruising along the Atlantic coast for more than a week, and at the time referred to they were just entering Long Island Sound from the sea.

A settlement known as New Haven, situated at the head of a magnificent harbor, was in the hands of the English, and the Queen of the Sea was resolved to strike a hard blow.

She had a double purpose in view, for the mail bags of a captured British cruiser which the two schooners had sunk off the coast of Virginia had given her important information, and her plans were quickly laid.

Her intention was to creep into the harbor under cover of the darkness, and to strike before their presence was suspected.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### A SILENT FOE.

The red schooner was in the lead, her bright hued sails looking as black as those of her consort in the darkness.

Juanita's orders had been that the Midnight should follow exactly in the wake of the Midday until further orders, and, to enable her crews to do so, a very small light had been placed in the cabin window of the Red Privateer.

At length Juanita calculated that they were close enough for her next move.

She gave her orders in a low tone, and the few sails that were set were quickly, though with great care, lowered to the decks, and a boat was sent back to the Midnight to give her the same orders.

Word was also sent to the negro Don to come on board of the Midday at once.

"Don," said Juanita, when he appeared. "Do you see those lights on our larboard bow?—those that are nearest?"

"Yes, Missy Nita."

"They shine from the British man-of-war Merciless."

"Yes, missy."

"If we go nearer in the schooner, or attempt to approach in small boats, we will be discovered. And one broadside from her guns would sink us without fail. Do you understand?"

"Ay—ay, Missy Nita, Don sees."

"Good. There is one way in which we may capture her, however, and that, too, without a sound being made that can be heard five hundred fathoms away."

Don's eyes glistened, but he waited patiently.

"There is no one but yourself in all the world that I know who can do this, Don. Will you do it?"

"Yes, Missy Nita."

"Take fifty of your men. Let them strip to the waist, or wear only a native girdle on their loins if they prefer. To their waists fasten a knife or two and let them carry their cutlasses between their teeth. Drop quietly overboard, and swim swiftly but silently to yonder vessel. When there, surround her at every point from whence you can climb to the deck. When all is ready give the cry of a loon—you can do it perfectly. That will be the signal for your attack. Mount silently to the deck, and as silently, one by one, strike down the watch. See that not a person escapes your vigilance to give warning to the men below. Let not a sound of any kind be made if you can avoid it. If you succeed thus far the remainder will be easy. Your next move will be to silently fasten down all the hatches and to do it securely. Then, with men, go to the cabin; open the door, or burst it open, if necessary, and make prisoners of all whom you find there. Bind them securely and take them up on deck. See that the approaches to the cabin, by way of the hold, are securely guarded; and then, when all is done, and my orders have been carried out to the letter, flash some powder in a pan from behind the poopdeck. I will see it and know that you have been successful. As soon as I see that I will send out some boats from this schooner, filled with men, whom you will silently assist on board. They will have their orders, and they will bring you further instructions. Remember, your watchword is 'Silence.' "

The brave negro turned and left his mistress, and was soon again upon the deck of the Midnight.

He soon selected the men, and they received their instructions.

Ten minutes later they were at the schooner's rail prepared for the expedition.

Don went among them from man to man, personally ascertaining if they were equipped to his satisfaction, and when, at length, he was entirely satisfied, he gave the word in a low tone, and they went quietly overboard without a splash or a sound.

Fifty woolly heads bobbing, from wave to wave toward the British vessel, fifty pairs of eyes eagerly glowing, fifty



hearts beating in expectancy, fifty pairs of hands itching to seize the enemy in no tender grasp.

Nearer and still nearer to the man-of-war they approached.

Twenty of them were under the chains at the bow. Ten were under the cabin windows at the stern and ten were scattered along on either side of the vessel.

Suddenly the lonely cry of a loon was heard, but so faint and indistinct that it sounded from far out in the bay.

The dark forms crept silently toward the deck.

They mounted at all parts of the vessel at once.

The sleepy watch had not heard a sound and the night was so dark that they had seen nothing.

Don was one of the party at the bow and he mounted the deck first.

When the negro, Don, reached the deck of the British man-of-war, the very first thing that he saw outlined against the sky was the form of the deck watch. He was standing with his back towards the intruder, and in an attitude which suggested that he had heard some slight sound to alarm him.

Don drew himself up quickly to the deck, and then he crouched and gathered himself for a spring. The instant came, and the black, almost naked body of the negro shot through the air like a projectile from a catapult. The great, black, muscular fingers closed around the watchman's throat like a vise from which there was no relaxing.

A quiver of the body—a convulsive shudder—a spasmodic contraction of the muscles—a violent effort to struggle, and then the watchman sank back into the negro's arms, and was laid quietly upon the deck, motionless and still.

But the first thing to be done was to fasten down the hatches, through which the crew might issue, should they receive the alarm. It was easily and effectually accomplished, and at last Don stood master of the deck of that man-of-war, from which one well-aimed broadside would have been sufficient to sink both schooners—the Midnight and the Mid-day.

Then they approached the cabin. The door which led to it was fastened, and, remembering his instructions, the brave negro whispered a few words to his followers, and then, drawing back, he threw himself with all his weight and strength against the barrier.

It gave way instantly, flying open with a crash, and the boarders crowded in, looking in the dim light of the ship's lamp, which was burning there, more like demons than like men. The noise made by the bursting of the door aroused the officers, and the next instant they came rushing from their several rooms to inquire the cause. But no sooner had they issued into the main cabin than they found themselves in the grasp of the negroes. Their struggles were useless—fruitless.

None came to their aid, and in a very short time they were bound and helpless.

Don was triumphant, and he turned up the wick of the lamp which had been burning dimly in the cabin. Then, more from a sense of elation and pride, than from curiosity, he went from one to another of the prisoners, scanning their faces closely.

Suddenly he paused, and looked even more keenly at one face he saw. It was the face of a man whom he had thought dead, the face of a man whom he had believed to be lying at the bottom of the harbor at Havana; the man whom he had dragged down, down into the depths, when at Juanita's orders he had swam to the rescue of Hal Hawkwing.

It was the traitor who had betrayed his captain and friends when in that port, and who had thus brought on the fight which had cost so many lives.

There were other discoveries he might have made had he looked further, but he thought it time that the signal was given. Juanita was standing upon the poop-deck of the Red Privateer when the flash came, and her heart bounded with joy.

Quickly she gave orders for the lowering and manning of

boats, and they were soon in the water filled with men and making their way towards the captured Merciless.

## CHAPTER XIX.

HAL HAWKWING.

The boats from the Red Privateer drew up silently, and the men mounted to the deck. Rube Carwell was in command, and he had explicit orders from Juanita. His first act was to cause the cable to be cut, and the great vessel, thus clear of her moorings, began to drift slowly out toward the sea. The men went aloft silently; and without any noise loud enough to attract attention her sails were shaken out and set, and the huge vessel began to make way down the bay toward the Sound.

The prize crew of the Merciless consisted of twenty-five men from the Midday, and twenty-five blacks from the Midnight.

No sooner were the sails well set and the huge vessel feeling their influence, than a loud pounding was heard on one of the closed hatchways. The sailors were disturbed. The motion of the vessel had awakened them, and they had hurried toward the deck. But the closed and fastened hatches prevented their egress. Then they began to pound upon them and to shout out at the top of their voices for the cause of the unprecedented occurrence. They demanded, in no gentle tones, to be freed from their confinement, and sought to break through and thus reach the deck.

Rube Carwell went at once to the main hatch and in stern tones ordered silence. The men beneath the hatch did not recognize the voice, and they demanded to know what had happened.

"The Merciless has been captured by the Americans," replied the Yankee boy, "and you are now, one and all, prisoners. If you are not quiet every man of you will be killed."

It is needless to say that there was not another sound from beneath the hatches during the balance of the night.

Juanita's orders to Rube had been for him to make for New London as well as he could, and the schooner would do likewise. Daylight found them considerably more than half way on their journey, and the Red Privateer signaled a halt. The three vessels headed up into the wind near together, and soon Juanita stepped on board of the man-of-war.

All of the spare men of both crews followed her, and they were drawn up in line, fully armed, and ready for fight preparatory to taking off the hatches. When all was ready, Rube went again to the main hatch and rapped loudly upon it.

He was immediately answered.

"We are ready for you now," he said. "I am about to open the hatch. You are to come up one at a time. If two try to come out at once both will be shot. Do you understand?"

"Ay—ay!" was the gruff answer.

A moment later and the hatch was opened. One after another the captured men came out, and were secured to the number of two hundred and three. They looked exceedingly crest-fallen and disgusted when they learned how easily they had been captured, but the elation which Juanita felt was very great. Calling Don and Broadside to her, she went to the cabin.

The prisoners that Don had taken had been securely bound upon being captured, but they were made as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

Juanita hastily looked them over. But much to her disappointment the very person of all others she longed to see and expected to find there, was missing. There was among them but one familiar face, and she did not identify that until Don whispered in her ear.

"So!" she said, when she remembered; "you are the man who was once a member of Captain Hal Hawkwing's crew. You are the man who at Havana betrayed him to the people who desired his fall. You talked then, in a room adjoining the one



in which I was, and I managed to see your face. I should have forgotten it but for Don. Where is your captain, sir?"

"Ashore," sullenly.

At that instant Rube Carwell entered the cabin.

"The prisoners think that we are going to burn the frigate," he said, "and they have just told me there is a prisoner in irons in the hold. Shall I release him?"

"Certainly. Bring that man on deck," she added to Don, when Rube had left.

Then she led the way to the deck. Presently the men who had been sent to the hold returned with the prisoner. Juanita looked up, and then uttered one loud cry of joy.

The released prisoner was no other than the chief of the Red Privateer, Hal Hawkwing!

His first act was to drop upon one knee before Juanita and then before all the men to thank her for what she had done in his behalf.

"The man who dragged me overboard that night," he said, "is dead. He ceased to live ere we had been a minute in the water. There was a strong breeze blowing at the time, so that when the boats that were lowered reached the water we were far in their wake. I seized upon a bit of a spar that had been thrown overboard, and that buoyed me up. Then I think I must have fainted, for the next thing that I remember was that I was alone in the open sea clinging to the spar. Soon after daylight I was picked up by men from this very frigate, and here I have been ever since. Juanita, my worst enemy, Oscar Raven, is the captain here. How he secured the position I do not know, but he is here, and instead of turning me over to the proper people he has kept me here. You have done a wonderful deed in cutting this vessel out from under the guns of three others, one of which is nearly as large as she is. Who are those black men, and what is yonder schooner?" pointing to the Midnight.

Juanita quickly told him, and again he fell upon his knees and thanked her, pressing her hand tenderly as he did so. But she drew it quickly away and brushed a tear from her eye.

"Look there," and she pointed her finger at the traitor.

"Ho!" cried the chief, "so you are here. A rope, my men!"

"Mercy!" cried the wretch, falling upon his knees.

But no mercy was shown. He was soon hung.

"Now, my men, listen! I have a word to say," Hal continued. "Carwell, go forward among the prisoners and ascertain how many pressed men there are there who would like to fight against, instead of for, Great Britain. Release all that you find and bring them here with you."

In a few moments Carwell returned, followed by thirty-six men.

"Good!" exclaimed the chief. "This makes my task easier. We will now set sail for Montauk Point. By night I will have obtained recruits enough to man this frigate. Then, once more, ho, for New Haven!"

Sail was soon set, and by noon the three vessels had come to anchor at a place from whence the chief could act. He hurried ashore, and in spite of his haste, his first call was at the cabin of the old negress.

Blossom was overjoyed to see him, but he cut her short in her raptures.

"The time has come, Blossom," he said, "for you to desert this cabin. Take your two charges and go to the two white birches. When there await me. I wish to take you all to a safer place than this, and besides, I feel that I am soon to crush that man who has been our curse."

Then he went on his way, and Blossom gathered up her effects and shortly afterward made her way toward the spot named. She led by the hand a poor, demented-looking woman, who was still beautiful, but who seemed to take no interest in anything that was going on around her.

With them was Bessie, in her natural attire, looking cheerful and well. It was late in the afternoon when Hal Hawkwing returned, but he had with him sixty able-bodied men, all of whom he had recruited in the neighborhood.

By the time that night had once more settled over that part of the world they were all embarked, and the three vessels were under way, heading for the port where the great effort was to be made. The night was nearly as dark as the preceding one, and by the time they had reached the entrance to the bay not a thing could be seen fifteen feet away.

They steered safely past all the dangers, and at last they could see here and there the glimmer of a light.

Small boats were sent out to reconnoiter, and then they went on. Hawkwing chose his position with care. The frigate was kept near the middle of the harbor, while the schooners crept up more closely upon either side.

Finally he gave the word. Forth from the frigate's side there burst a volume of flame and smoke startling to behold.

Following the really frightful discharge came others simultaneously from each of the schooners, and the iron missiles, hurled with such terrible force, went crashing and tearing into the enemy, mercilessly cutting down spars and men.

## CHAPTER XX.

### FACE TO FACE AT LAST.

Confusion reigned supreme on board of the British vessels in the harbor when the storm of iron hail burst so suddenly upon them. The very first intimation that they had of danger was the sudden broadside fired from the frigate Merciless, which, only twenty-four hours before, would so gladly have turned her guns upon the very men who were now firing them.

In madness, in desperation, they sought to get their guns to bear upon the foe, but that frightful hail-storm of iron poured in upon them from three directions at once, and they did not know what to do.

Vainly did the officers endeavor to rally their men. The effort was useless. They were palsied by the onslaught.

Of the two British vessels, one was a frigate—not quite so large as the Merciless—and the other a corvette. They were well armed and manned, and under ordinary circumstances would have overmatched the attacking force, manned as it was by so many who were utterly unused to work like that.

But the very first broadside of the Merciless decided the battle.

Suddenly a sheet of flame burst from the corvette. She had taken fire. The flames leaped up in awful fury. They licked the tapering masts with their scorching tongues; they ignited the combustible sails; they ran along the decks, eagerly gorging the resin and pitch and tar which were in their course.

Suddenly there was an alarming cry:

"The magazine—the magazine! Fly for your lives!"

Everything was abandoned. The men rushed to the rails like a flock of sheep, and leaped en masse into the water. None too soon. There was a sudden and a terrific roar, followed by a frightful explosion. The corvette seemed to be lifted bodily from the water, and hurled heavenward by a mighty hand.

Did the Merciless cease her fire then? Did the Midnight or the Midday hesitate to continue the battle?

No. The dreadful storm of iron continued. The guns still belched forth their messengers of death; the fight went on.

The guns from the remaining vessel answered feebly, and, as long as there was a shot in reply, Hal Hawkwing would not desist.

Suddenly the firing from the British frigate ceased altogether. As soon as this was perceived the attacking vessels discontinued their fire also. Seizing his trumpet, for the vessels had drifted quite near together, Hawkwing leaped into the rigging.



"Do you surrender?" he cried.

"Ay—ay!" came the answer.

"Send your officers aboard," ordered Hawkwing sternly.

"We haven't a boat left that will float. You will have to send boats for the officers."

The necessary orders were given, and the boats were lowered and manned. Then they shot away through the darkness.

The task was at last accomplished, and the boats again drew near to the *Merciless*. When they touched the side Hawkwing ordered a ship's lamp brought, and himself stood where he could see the faces of the officers as they came over the side. One by one they passed him until they were all upon the deck.

No—all but one. He was badly wounded, and they were obliged to lift him up. His right leg had been shot away.

Hawkwing had not yet seen the face for which he was looking, although he had eagerly scanned each one. When the wounded man was lifted over the side he bent forward quickly.

"At last!" he exclaimed. "So, Oscar Raven, we meet again."

Hal Hawkwing was not inhuman. He saw that his prisoner was suffering tortures from his wound.

"To the cabin with him!" he cried. "Let him have the best of care, and, mark you, see that I am kept informed of his condition."

A prize crew was sent on board of the captive frigate, where, by the way, many of the crew were impressed men, and were only anxious to fight for the country they loved.

Then the sails were set, and the fleet of four vessels started for New London where they could gladden the hearts of the Americans by the news of the capture, and by giving them the two vessels.

As soon as they were well under weigh, Hal Hawkwing went below. Oscar Raven was stretched upon a couch in the cabin, and at the first glance the chief saw that he was dying.

"Raven," he said, coldly, taking a seat by the side of his enemy, "the hours—nay, perhaps the minutes, of your life are numbered. I do not pity you in the least; I am not even sorry for the plight into which you have fallen. For years you have been a cold-blooded, heartless villain, and now your time has come to die."

"And yours to gloat over me?"

"Nay—not that. I have come to you here upon your couch of death to tell you that your only hope in that dark and mysterious future lies in the reparation which you can make during your last moments in this world. Your wife and child are here upon this vessel. Will you see them?"

"My wife and child!" gasped the dying man.

"Ay, my sister and my niece. Will you see them? You cannot restore Irma to life, but you can make atonement to the living."

"Irma to life! Is Irma dead?"

"Scoundrel! So you know not that she is?"

"No, Hal Hawkins. When I left her in the cabin of the bark at Havana she was well."

"I believe you, Raven, and for that reason I can forgive much if you now do your duty. There is a minister on board. Will you do it?"

The dying man smiled.

"Of him I have no need," he responded slowly, and speaking with difficulty. "Yonder, in my stateroom, is a chest; among the papers there, you will find the certificate of our marriage. Laura is my wife now. Yes, bring her and Bessie here."

Presently they stood before the dying man.

"Laura," said he, to his half-demented wife, "I am dying. Can you not forgive me?"

She stared at him vacantly, and gazed about her bewildered.

"I do not know you," she murmured.

The man sighed heavily.

"Bessie," he said to the child, "I am your father. Have you no word for me?"

But Bessie did not recognize him either. She tried to speak kindly, but there was little consolation in her words.

At length Hawkwing was again alone with the dying man.

"Hal," he said, "I am dying. You will find the paper where I said. I am a villain, but I regret it all now, when it is too late. I stole your sister Laura, but she is my wife. Then, when two years ago you tore her from me, demented as she was, even then, by cruel treatment, I was maddened. Then I captured Irma. A worse fate was in store for her, for I hated you. You foiled me. I am glad that you did. It gives me one less crime for which to answer. Be good to Bessie and to Laura. Do not teach the child to hate the memory of her father. The papers are there. Oh, if I could live now I would be a better man; but it is too late—too late. See, it's getting dark. I am dying. Forgive, as you hope for forgiveness!"

His head fell back. He was dead.

The sea received his body, and over it Hal Hawkwing read the funeral service ere it was consigned to the deep.

New London was reached without accident, and the prizes were turned over to the proper authorities.

At length, when everything was attended to, when there was no longer any need for them to remain at New London, the two strange-looking schooners, one so black, and the other so red, spread their wings and flew away towards their island retreat.

## CHAPTER XXI.

### CONCLUSION.

As the two schooners were nearing Volcano Island Hal Hawkwing spoke the words that were on his mind.

"Juanita," he said, for she had remained on board the *Red Privateer*, leaving Don in command of the *Midnight*, "will you listen to a few words which I have to say to you?"

"No, no! Not now!" she cried, startled, for the moment that she feared had come.

"And why not now?" he repeated. "It is not well to defer anything when the time for action has arrived. Juanita, I love you! All the strength of my heart goes out in this one question—will you be my wife?"

"No—no—no—no!" she cried, darting away from him. "It cannot be! It can never be!"

"Never, Juanita! Why?"

"Hal," she said, solemnly, "when we buried Irma you thought that your sister was no more, but you were mistaken. Irma lives! It was Juanita who died on the bark; it was Juanita whom we buried amid the flowers of Volcano Island. Irma, your sister, lives, for I am Irma; Hal—I am your sister!"

He staggered back as though he had been stricken a blow.

"What do you mean?" he cried. "Explain, for pity's sake!"

"Do you remember the papers which you told me to read should the schooner return without you?"

"Yes."

"You could not read them all yourself, but I could. Those English letters simply told the outlines of a strange story which you could not half comprehend. The Spanish letters explained it all."

"Go on!" hoarsely.

"I recognized the handwriting of my father instantly in them."

"Your father?"

"Yes. Your father and mine were the same. You never knew his true character; I did. He was a corsair. Volcano Island was his. It is there that I was born."

"Ay, my mother was away when Irma was born. That is true."



"Irma was brought to you with a message from your father, in which you and Laura, who was older than you, were told to care for her."

"Yes."

"Did you ever see your father again?"

"No."

"Did you ever hear of Captain Blackwing?"

"The pirate? Yes, often."

"Hal, Captain Blackwing and Richard Hawkwing were one and the same. He was your father and mine."

"Goodness! Can this be true?"

"It is true. Now, listen."

"Go on."

"The corsair had captured a Spanish vessel just before Irma was sent to you. Upon that Spanish vessel was a child—a girl—whose father had been killed in the fight. She had no name, and so they called her Juanita, after the ship on which she was. Shortly afterwards your father determined to send Irma to you, and to keep the child Juanita with him. He felt that he owed it to Heaven that his own child should not be reared in the knowledge of what her father really was. As for the other, she was parentless, and he would care for her as his own, and she should never know the difference. Both were mere babies, and of about the same age. Irma was sent away on one of his vessels; he had three. I am speaking now of your sister—of myself. Before the vessel which was bearing her to you had been long gone, the mood of our father changed. He could not part with his youngest child. For Laura he cared but little. She was the issue of his first marriage; he was weaned from her. You and Irma came from the same mother. You he could not keep with him. You were a boy, and he had not the heart to rear you in crime. You should never know that your father had become a pirate. But he could not bear the thought of being parted from all of his children. Irma was on her way to you, and once there she would be lost to him forever. The children at that age resembled each other strangely, and one, the real Irma, had the scar of a slight wound upon her shoulder where a cut had been accidentally made by a knife. Our father resolved to have his own child back again, and he sent his second vessel out to overtake the first and to make the exchange. It was accomplished. The child Irma was taken back to the island, and Juanita was sent to you instead. It is all told in the letter and in the diary—nay, more, I have the mark upon my shoulder. I am Irma, your sister, and she who died was Juanita."

Hal's face was white and drawn, but he smothered his emotion. Bending forward he kissed her tenderly upon her forehead.

"All right, little sister," he said. "I am proud of you. It is perhaps a brotherly love that I feel, after all, only I did not so understand it."

Then he turned and went on deck, and Juanita did not see him again until the schooners were lying behind the cliff in the cove of Volcano Island. As soon as he left her in the cabin she sank, weeping, upon a couch.

As soon as the schooners were anchored in the cove she went on deck.

"Hal," she said, "leave the men to set things to rights. Come with me to the castle."

He went obediently, for he felt from her manner that there was yet more to learn. Nor was he mistaken. Juanita went directly to the room which she called hers. She confidently expected to find Maria there, but the room was empty.

"Maria! Maria!" she called, but there came no answer.

Suddenly she espied a roll of paper lying against the face of the great French clock. She went to it quickly, and spread it open before her. Then she read aloud:

"Juanita," the paper ran, "I am dying. My life is gauged almost by hours—perhaps by moments. You may find me here pencil in hand when you return, and with my story yet untold. I hope that I may live long enough to tell it. If the paper is here and I am gone, do not search for me. In the cliffs there is a cave where I hide. There I will drag myself at the last moment, and there I will sleep the last sleep. \* \* \* I have not strength to write much. The greater part of my story must remain untold. My hand is even now weak and my eyes are dim. I must hasten. You must be told who you are. Your father thought you were Irma, but you are not! You are Juanita."

The paper fell from her hands, and Hal started forward eagerly, but she waved him back.

"Wait!" she said, and then read on:

"Irma was sent to the captain's son, and a vessel was sent to bring her back and to send you instead. There was a man in his command who hated him. He saw an opportunity for revenge. He was in command of the vessel which was sent to make the exchange. Instead of carrying out his orders as they were given, he took both children and went on. Upon your shoulder he made the mark resembling Irma's. To the son he delivered the real Irma, and with you, Juanita, the foundling, he returned. But ere he reached the island he was attacked, and in the fight he was wounded. He died before he reached this island. He alone knew the truth of this matter. To his mate he gave some papers to be given to me secretly. They told the story as it was. The papers are now in the treasure vault. You are not the daughter of Captain Blackwing, but Juanita, the foundling; I never told what I knew. \* \* \* My memory is leaving me again, I must stop and hurry to my grave. I have written the truth. You will find proof in the treasure vault. Forgive me and pray for me. I am going mad again. I am dying. Goodby. Maria."

With a glad cry Juanita sank into Hal's arms, which were open to receive her. Together they visited the treasure vault. It was a mine of untold wealth. There they found the proof to which Maria had referred. The treasure was bare before them.

Hal Hawkwing gazed at it for a long time. At last he spoke.

"As the heir of my father, the corsair, this wealth is mine," he said. "I accept it, and I will devote it to a noble purpose. It shall buy ships and arms and equipments for my struggling country, and once again I will take up the cudgels in the fight for freedom and independence. You, Juanita, shall be beside me—my wife. In New London I learned that I was the first to float the Stars and Stripes, and while I live it shall never be hauled down to the enemy."

"Amen!" said Juanita.

THE END.

Read "THE IRON SPIRIT; or, THE MYSTERY OF THE PLAINS," by An Old Scout, which will be the next number (567) of "Pluck and Luck."

SPECIAL NOTICE: All back numbers of this weekly except the following are in print: 1 to 5, 7, 8, 10 to 13, 15 to 20, 22, 25, 29 to 31, 34 to 36, 38, 39, 42, 43, 48 to 51, 54, 55, 57, 58, 60, 62, 64, 68, 69, 75, 81, 84 to 86, 89, 93, 100, 109, 116, 119, 124 to 126, 162, 163, 166, 171, 179 to 181, 212, 265. If you cannot obtain the ones you want from any newsdealer, send the price in money or postage stamps by mail to FRANK TOUSEY, PUBLISHER, 24 UNION SQUARE, New York, and you will receive the copies you order, by return mail.



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## THINGS OF INTEREST.

By traveling ninety miles across an unknown country, and mostly in the dark, in fifteen hours the winner of the military ski race in the Swedish Northern Games has splendidly shown the possibilities of snowshoes as a means of locomotion. In a former contest, some years ago, over a distance of 138 miles, the start was made at six o'clock one morning, and the majority of the competitors completed the journey early in the afternoon of the following day, while in a more recent race the first man home, a Finn, covered the distance, forty miles, at an average speed of eight and a half miles an hour.

The Dead Sea is a Government monopoly, and at present is leased out to a small native company. They have a wooden boat built for a sailing vessel, but about six months ago had had a motor put in it. If this company succeeds they might try a couple more motorboats. The Dead Sea is one-third solid matter, the greater part of which is salt, and the question to answer is, can the hulls stand the action of this salt water? People in this country are not wealthy enough to afford a motorboat for pleasure only, and as no one would be allowed to use one on the Dead Sea, Jaffa is the only possible market for boats in the district. The Jordan Valley, the river, and the Dead Sea are the personal property of the Sultan. A permit must be first obtained from the Sultan before boats of any kind can be launched thereon. Such permits have heretofore been very difficult to procure for motorboats.

A startling discovery has just been made in Mammoth Cave, which is indisputably the effect of the drought which has prevailed over that section for ninety days. In some of the avenues where water from ten to fifteen feet deep stood, it is now perfectly dry. The effect is more noticeable on Echo river than any place. That famous stream, which normally can only be traversed for a short distance, owing to the water and the roof of the cave being so near each other, can now be traveled for miles, and it is claimed that the echoes, grand at all times, have been intensified thousands of times by the low water. Many of the avenues and inlets not known to have existed before have been discovered, and at the present water stage many miles of avenues and grottos can be seen. While the water is low an effort will be made to locate the exit of Echo river.

A chemical company has devised a grenade, or glass receptacle, filled with a chemical compound, as a means of making

it impossible for safe-blowers to rob a safe after breaking it open. It is an inoffensive-looking article, about two inches in diameter and five inches long. Inside of the exterior tube are seven small ones, each filled with a different chemical. When the door of the safe is blown, or the safe is jarred heavily, the grenade explodes and the air is filled with the deadly fumes. It is claimed that these fumes, which, so far as effect is concerned, are not unlike the gases from the deadly Chinese "stinkpots," are powerful enough to make breathing impossible, and to force all persons near the safe to retreat, or be almost instantly suffocated. The grenades are made with a lasting effect of from six to ten hours, depending upon the size, and are placed just back of the locking mechanism of the safe doors.

## OUR COMIC COLUMN.

"Oh, pshaw! You haven't any stock of hats at all!"  
"Why, madame, you have tried on two hundred and forty so far!"

Housewife (to new maid servant)—If either of my sons should try to be too familiar tell him he mustn't; as for my husband, box his ears.

"Bliggins says he owes everything to his wife."  
"Well," answered the man who never has a kind word, "I don't know of any one else who would take a chance on being his creditor."

Jones—Did you deliver my message to Mr. Smith?  
Johnny—No, sir. His office was locked.  
Jones—Well, why didn't you wait for him, as I told you?  
Johnny—There was a note on the door saying, "Return at once," so I came back.

Beginner (wrathfully)—Look here, I'm tired of your laughing at my game. If I hear any more impudence from you I'll crack you over the head.  
Caddie—All right; but I'll bet yer don't know what's the right club to do it with.

A countrywoman was taking her son to school for the first time, and after impressing the schoolmaster with the necessity of giving him a thoroughly good education, finished up by saying:  
"Be sure he learns Latin."  
"But, my dear woman," said the schoolmaster, "Latin is a dead language."  
"So much the better," replied the woman. "Ye ken he's gaun tae be an undertaker."

An old lady who was in the habit of declaring, after the occurrence of an unusual event, that she had predicted it, was one day very nicely sold by her worthy spouse, who, like many others we have heard of, had got tired of her eternal "I told you so!" Rushing into the house breathless with excitement, he dropped into his chair, elevated his hands and exclaimed, "Oh, wife, wife! What—what—what do you think? The old brindle cow has gone and eaten up our grindstone!"  
The old lady was ready, and hardly waiting to hear the last word, she broke out at the top of her lungs: "I told you so, you old fool. I told you so. You always would let it stan' out o' doors!"



## "Haven't the Change."

By PAUL BRADDON.

It was house-cleaning time, and I had an old woman at work scrubbing and cleaning paint.

"Polly is going," said one of my domestics, as the twilight began to fall.

"Very well. Tell her that I shall want her to-morrow."

"I think she would like to have her money for to-day's work," said the girl.

I took out my purse and found that I had nothing in it but gold.

"I haven't the change this evening," said I. "Tell her that I'll pay her for both days to-morrow."

The girl left the room, and I thought no more of Polly for an hour. Tea time had come and passed, when one of my domestics, who was rather communicative in her habits, said to me:

"I don't think Polly liked you not paying her this evening."

"She must be very unreasonable, then," said I, without reflection. "I sent her word that I had no change. How could she expect that I could pay?"

"Some people are queer, you know," remarked the girl who made the communication, more for the pleasure of telling it than anything else.

I kept thinking over what the girl had said until other suggestions came into my mind.

"I wish I had sent and got some change," said I, as the idea that Polly might be really in want of the money intruded itself. "It would have been very little trouble."

This was the beginning of a new train of reflections, which did not make me very happy. To avoid a little trouble, I sent the poor old woman away after a hard day's work without her money. That she stood in need of it was evident from the fact that she had asked for it.

"How very thoughtless in me," said I, as I dwelt longer on the subject.

"What's the matter?" inquired my husband, seeing me look serious.

"Nothing to be very much troubled about," I replied.

"Yet you are troubled."

"I am, and cannot help it. You will, perhaps, smile at me, but small causes sometimes produce much pain. Old Polly has been at work all day, scrubbing and cleaning. When night came, she asked for her wages, and I, instead of taking the trouble to get the money for her, sent word that I hadn't any change. I didn't reflect that a poor woman who had to go out to daily work must need her money as soon as earned. I am very sorry!"

My husband did not reply for some time. My words seemed to have made considerable impression on his mind.

"Do you know where Polly lives?" he inquired, at length.

"No; but I will ask the girl." And immediately ringing the bell, I made inquiries as to where Polly lived, but no one in the house knew.

"It can't be helped now," said my husband, in a tone of regret; "but I would be more thoughtful in the future. The poor always need their money. Their daily labor rarely does more than supply their daily wants. I can never forget a circumstance that occurred when I was a boy. My mother was left a widow when I was but nine years old—and she was poor. It was by the labor of her hands that she obtained shelter and food for herself and three little ones.

"Once—I remember the occurrence as if it had taken place yesterday—we were out of money and food. At breakfast time our last morsel was eaten, and we went through the long day without a taste of bread. We all grew very hungry by night; but our mother encouraged us to be patient a little while longer, until she finished the garment she was making, when she would take that and some other work home to a lady who would pay for the work. Then, she said, we should have a nice supper. At last the work was finished, and I went with my mother to help carry it home, for she was weak and sickly, and even a light burden fatigued her. The lady for whom she had made the garment was in good circumstances, and had no want unsupplied that money could supply. When we came into her presence she took the work, and after glancing at it carelessly, said: 'It will do very well.'

"My mother lingered; perceiving which, the lady said: 'You want your money, I suppose. How much does the work come to?'

"'Three dollars,' replied my mother.

"The lady took out her purse, and said: 'I haven't the change this evening. Call over at any time and you shall have it. And without giving my mother time earnestly to urge her request, turned from us and left the room.

"I never shall forget the night that followed. My mother's feelings were sensitive and independent. She could not make known her wants. An hour after our return home she sat weeping with her children around her, when a neighbor came in, and learning our situation supplied our present need."

This relation did not make me feel the more comfortable. Anxiously I waited on the next morning the arrival of Polly. As soon as she came I sent for her, and handing her the money she had earned the day before, said:

"I'm sorry I hadn't the change for you last night, Polly. I hope you didn't want it very badly."

Polly hesitated a little, and then replied:

"Well, ma'am, I did want it very much, or I wouldn't have asked for it. My poor daughter Hetty is sick, and I wanted to get her something nice to eat."

"I am sorry," said I, with sincere regret. "How is Hetty this morning?"

"She isn't so well, ma'am, and I feel very uneasy about her."

"Come up to me in half an hour, Polly," said I.

The old woman went downstairs. When she appeared again, according to my desire, I had a basket for her, in which were some wine, sugar, fruit, and various little matters that I thought her daughter would relish, and told her to go at once and take them to the sick girl. Her expression of gratitude touched my feelings deeply. Never since have I omitted, under any pretence, to pay the poor their wages as soon as earned.

## FLIM-FLAM

Anyone whose business or pleasure requires him to be present at popular resorts may notice a certain class of natty, young or middle-aged men who seem to have no means of support, and yet are generally supplied with plenty of money. On any pleasant afternoon in the spring or fall you will recognize their faces on Broadway. Go to the gardens on Sixth avenue at night, and you will again notice them sitting around with friends. If you ask a detective who and what they are, he will say: "I think they are gamblers."

If you visit the faro banks and clubrooms, you will see the same men nightly lose sums of money and try in vain to borrow ten dollars to continue the game. When one gets up



from the table and says: "Lend me twenty dollars to do business with," the money is immediately handed over, and he then starts out to come back in the course of an hour or so, return the borrowed capital and show a small sum in addition. You are still inquisitive to know his resources, and wondering why his friends will not lend him money off-handed, but will advance capital for "business" purposes. You will ask one of the gambling fraternity, if he happens to be a friend, and he will explain that he is a "flim-flammer."

Where the name of the business ever originated it is impossible to say, but the field in which it operates is large. The amount of money a good flim-flam operator can obtain in one day depends upon the character and condition of his victims. He enters a store where all hands are busy. "Can you accommodate me with the change of a twenty-dollar bill?" he asks.

The clerk or cashier takes the note, examines it and returns generally with one ten and two five dollar notes. "I want to put one of these in an envelope. Will you oblige me with a clean bill?"

If he is not accommodated, he says: "I am sorry to trouble you so much, but I would like to have small change for this five." If that is changed by some hook or crook, the clerk loses five dollars. This is one method practiced by a well-dressed, handsome young man, whom the writer has seen operate five or six times, and cannot discover where the leakage is. The last time it occurred he stood alongside of the cashier at the Iron Pier at Coney Island, and with a full knowledge of what was going to take place, saw the operation. The cashier was short just five dollars that night.

Another system has been in operation against pay-tellers of banks. A man with one arm in a sling asks for change of a note of large denomination, and taking his place directly in front of the teller, asks him to place the money in a large envelope. The teller hands over a lot of bills, already counted, and in packages with a strip of paper pinned around them. The operator bunglingly tries to place the bulky package in his inside coat pocket, and working with one hand only, naturally attracts the teller's attention. After several unsuccessful attempts he gives it up and hot-temperedly says: "Oh, give me large bills or something I can put in my pocket easily."

The cashier has just counted the bunch of small bills, or knows they are just so many in a package, and fails to count them over when they are thrown back. He throws out a requisite number of notes of larger denomination. The hand on the broken arm of the operator has meantime extracted as many bills as it was safe to do while he was trying to put the big envelope in his pocket. If the teller does count them over, he is stuck, because the operator claims that he didn't count them when handed out, and they were never out of the teller's sight.

When the flim-flammer has not got large capital to operate with, he is contented to walk into a restaurant and put down a twenty-dollar note. The cashier proceeds to count out the change, and, of course, slides in a few trade or silver dollars. "You have dropped some money on the floor," says the operator. The cashier looks; and, sure enough, there is a bill lying behind the counter. He stoops to pick it up, the flim-flammer extracts a note of some kind from the pile, and says:

"Oh, never mind bothering about the change, here is the exact money for my check," and walks off with his booty.

Of late many cigar dealers have been victimized by a smart flim-flammer, who asks for a five-cent cigar, and displays a trade dollar which he delays giving up until after he lights his cigar.

The storekeeper has ninety-five cents all ready. The operator puts down his silver dollar, the ninety-five cents is shoved toward him. "I don't want to carry all that silver," he says,

placing the ninety-five cents on top of the trade dollar, and producing an extra nickel. "Give me two dollars for this," and it generally takes the shopkeeper over an hour to find out that he has been swindled out of ninety-five cents.

The candy men with some circus shows are adepts at this game. They receive a ten-dollar note to change, and count out the change by having a two-dollar bill double on the top of a pile which they count over their fingers, clasping the notes in the middle. "Two and two are four," they say, counting both ends of the doubled note, and continue in the regular manner to make up the balance of the change, and hand the change to the victim rolled up. The victim thinks he has seen all the change he requires, and pushes it into his pocket without counting it over.

All schemes of this kind are called flim-flam by the men engaged in them, and to a successful operator it requires self-possession with a good nerve, and generally a good talker to get himself out of difficulty when caught. There is always some person who is willing to advance them money if they are good in business, and the field of operation is so large that it takes months to exhaust a new scheme. Many storekeepers have been victimized to such an extent that they suspect that something is wrong the moment change for a note is requested.

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During a trip to Boeland, South Africa, an English gentleman and his friend had the glory of shooting a rhinoceros. They found him a dangerous beast to tackle, and a difficult one to kill. Sixteen bullets did he carry off from the fight, walking for several hours, and then bleeding to death. The encounter with the huge, unwieldy beast occurred at night, by a water-hole, while they were waiting for game. Each of the Englishmen was seated with a Kaffir servant in the fork of a tree, looking out for buffalo. There were plenty of bush-buck and other antelope drinking and gamboling at the edge of the water-hole, but the sporting men were determined to shoot at nothing less than a buffalo. At last the advance of two magnificent koodoos, whose beautiful spiral horns towered above them as they walked into the pool, caused the sportsmen to forget their resolution. Both fired. One koodoo fell; the other made off, desperately wounded. One of the Englishmen was about descending from the tree. A shout from his friend, and a heavy footfall, accompanied with a puff—puff—like that of a steam-engine, warned him to remain. Out from the dense bush came a black rhinoceros, mad with wickedness. Seeing the hunters, he butted again and again the trees in which they were seated. His furious charges almost shook them off. Bullet after bullet was fired into him, but, apparently, he was as indifferent as if he had been hit with peas. At length, an expansive ball dropped on his snout, just behind his horn, and brought him to his knees. Getting up and stamping the ground, he made for the bush. At daylight, the hunters followed his trail, which at first was marked with blood. About a mile on, the flattened grass showed where the brute had rested. The trail led across an open sward of grass into a thicket. Just as the hunters were cautiously entering it, a bird flew up, uttering a shrill "Tcha—tcha!" Out came the beast, staggering as if drunk. Three shots brought him to his knees. But he arose, faced around as if to charge, changed his mind, and ran into the bush. The hunters, following, found him lying on his side, and quite dead. The wonderful vitality of the animal is shown in the fact that he had lived several hours with thirteen bullets in his body, and after trotting three or four miles, and bleeding profusely, had retained his life until three more shots killed him.



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